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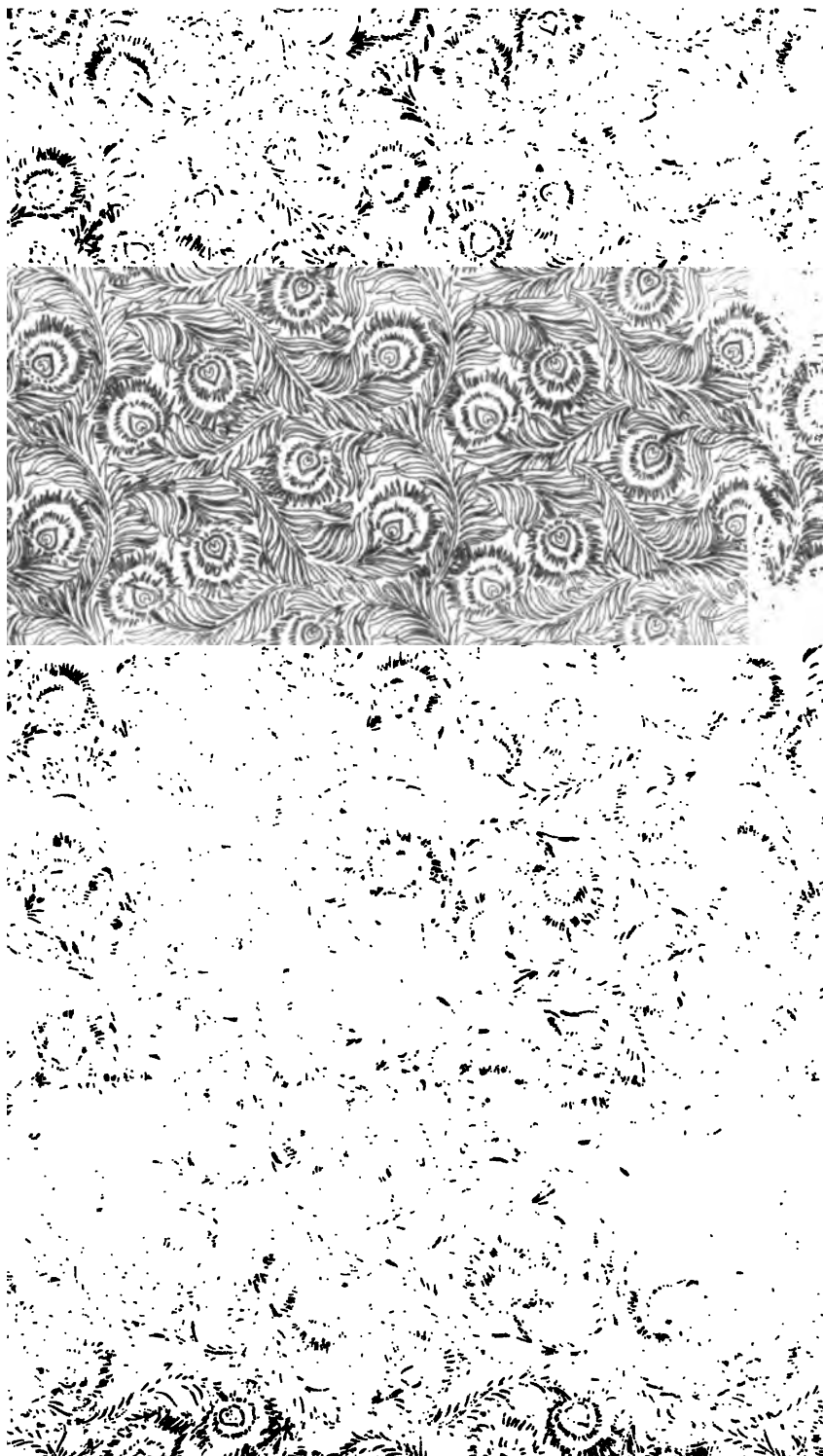
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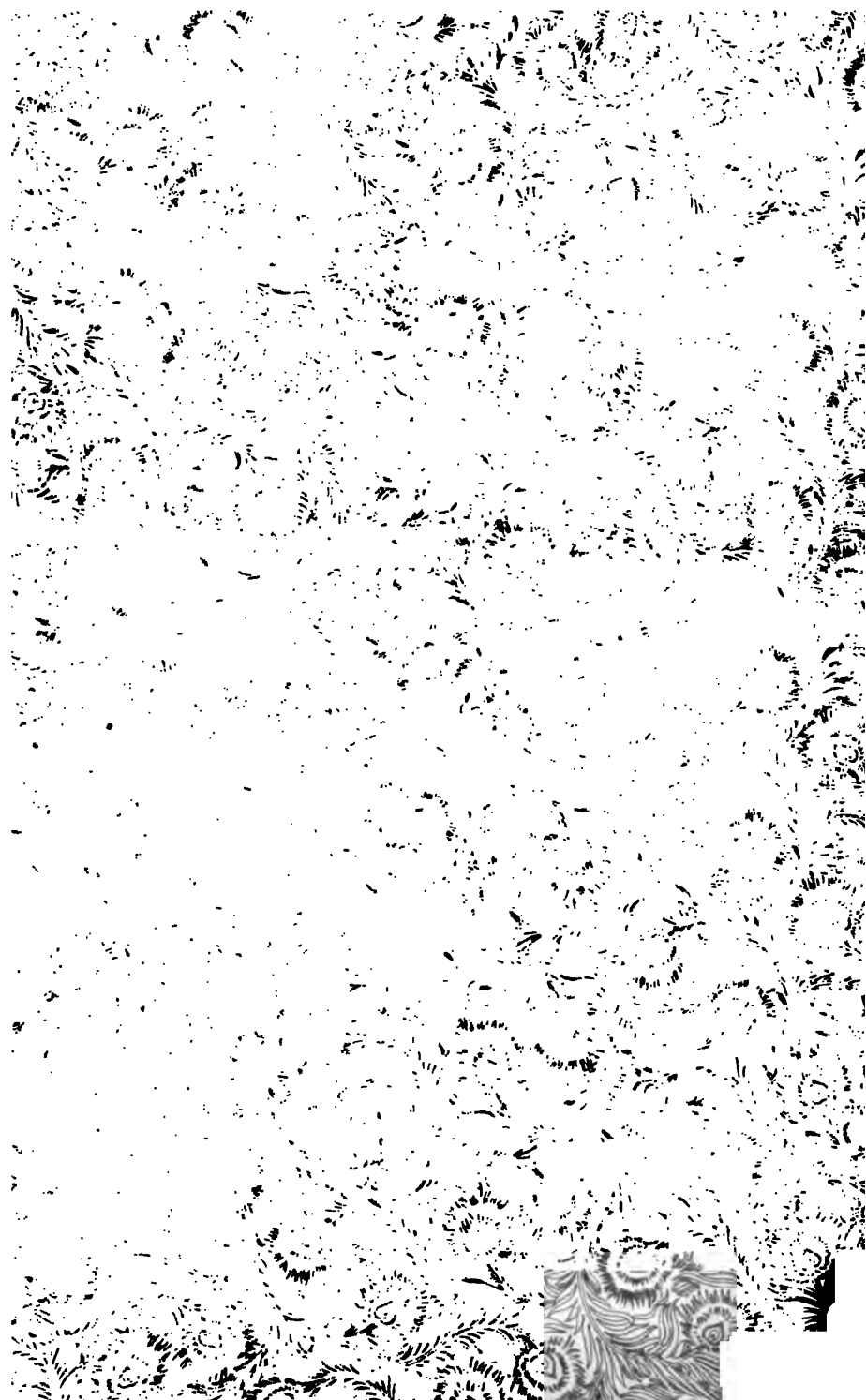
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EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

STUDIES OF THE MIND IN CHRIST

BY

REV. THOMAS ADAMSON, B.D.

GLASGOW

FORMERLY EXAMINER FOR DIVINITY DEGREES IN EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY

EDINBURGH

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“Ecce res magna, habere imbecillitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.”—Seneca, *Ep.* 53.

“Auf diesem Standpunkt gibt es eigentlich nur eine Frage, nur ein Problem, nach welchem alle andern gelöst sind. Wie kann metaphysisches Bewusstsein in eine menschliche Natur eingehen?”

Baldensperger, *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, 2 Aufl. p. 270.

“Quiconque croit quelque chose, estime que c'est ouvrage de charité de la persuader à un aultre, et, pour ce faire, ne craind point d'adiouster, de son invention, autant qu'il veoid estre necessaire en son conte, pour suppléer à la resistance et au default qu'il pense estre en la conception d'aultruy.”

Montaigne, *Essais*, iii. 11.

P R E F A C E



Is there any need to apologise for trying to obtain some light on the knowledge which our Lord had as a man ?

The task must indeed be difficult, and is perhaps in some respects impossible. Yet its difficulty or the imperfection of its results cannot form sufficient reason for shirking it. The mystery which broods over the whole subject calls for care and humility, but does not seal us into a necessary ignorance ; whilst the results which may be gained, though they may seem small, must be considered to warrant any trouble put forth. For all that concerns the person of Jesus Christ must ever take rank as of first value. And this subject has significance second to none even of those which are concerned with Him ; for on it depends the worth of much of His teaching and our conception of His work.

Of course some people are apt to characterise all inquiry into this matter as prying and as disrespectful to Christ. Now, it is true that whatever is not earnest in tone and reverential in treatment deserves to be condemned. But he who refuses to know all that may be known about Jesus Christ, errs as much as he who tries to be wise beyond what is written. We

must deal with Scripture honestly, if we are to deal with it reverently. If we ignore anything it tells of Christ, we are untrue to Christ Himself.

We must face the facts in the Gospels ; they are our only authority on the subject. But we need have no fear in doing so. The ark needs no Uzzah's hand to hold it up. What we see to have been true of our Lord on earth we find to be true of Him still, that He never loses by being better known.

It need scarcely be said that the four Gospels have been accepted as the material in which to work. They claim the right to represent the facts. And the substantial correctness of their claim is being more clearly recognised than it was. The aim is not to criticise them, but to show the mental complexion of Him whom they cause to pass before us on every side of His life. To choose certain parts of them and to reject others would be to give but a feeble, because inadequate representation, and to confess inability to unite all the facts in one person. No explanation can have anything better than subjective and individual value, which does not accept and find place for all the facts which cluster round and claim to belong to Christ in the Gospels.

It seems almost unnecessary to state that the narratives must be taken to mean what they say, and to say all they mean. What we find inconvenient we may have put out of place ; it were folly to brand it as untrue, or to regard it as unnecessary.

In fine, in a life which on the surface of it bears the evident traces of being genuinely human, and which

lays claim to that as a thing unimpaired even by the presence of divinity, no supernatural explanations should be adopted where any natural ones are possible and sufficient. We are not at liberty to believe that divinity did the work of humanity, or in any respect rendered it less human. Nay, we are prohibited from fancying that it prevented or marred the working of that human nature with which it is represented as being in personal union.

The author's best thanks are due to the Rev. James Moffatt, B.D., Dundonald, for much kind aid in passing the proof sheets through the press and preparing the index.



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STUDIES OF THE MIND IN CHRIST

CHAPTER I

CHRIST'S IGNORANCE

MUCH of our ordinary knowledge consists of vague impressions. Many of our beliefs we have never verified, perhaps never questioned. A large portion we have accepted from others whose opinions they happened to be.

So it is in our theology. There too we are children of carelessness and slaves of our sloth. We remain vague or illogical. For instance, though the wonderful personality of Christ has probably many attractions in our eyes, we may never have taken pains to form a true and worthy conception of Him. It is possible that many who believe in His actual manhood would recoil from the thought that He had been a real child, helpless on His mother's breast, subject to growth of body and of mind. Many who do believe that He died, never thought weariness or sleep were genuine and regular in Him as in us. Many who know that He answered innumerable and varied questions, as no other could have done, are

horrified at what seems the impiety of ascribing to Him any real questions — questions asked because of ignorance, and from a desire for information.

Yet on reflection one sees that if Christ is to be anything at all, even real God, to us, He must be real man. Now that means, of course, much more than the possession of a mere human body; His mind must have been as truly human. Nay, true humanity must have been His at every stage of growth, for His manhood could not be more genuine than His childhood was.

Of course, it is easy for us to believe that His body was real like ours; but we find it more difficult to grasp the fact that He had a true human mind, a mind which worked by the same faculties and within the same limits as ours; for we look on Him as the Son of God become man. We instinctively ascribe to Him, even incarnate, the same fulness of knowledge we believe Him to have possessed when pre-incarnate. Or rather, we imagine that He possessed the same knowledge in His humanity as in His Divine nature, because these both belonged to Him. That were, however, to destroy His manhood, both as to completeness and reality. It, and so its significance—His work—would become a mere show, a pretence, an imposition, a failure.

What the limits of His knowledge were when He was on earth, ere He tasted death, let us now try to see.

When one begins to think on this subject the text which naturally occurs first of all to the mind is that well-known saying of our Lord:¹ "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven,

¹ Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36.




neither the Son, but the Father." Now we are not interested meantime to find the event pointed out in these words. We are concerned rather to remark that in them the Saviour expresses plainly His own ignorance as to its time. Augustine, in his tractate on the Trinity, thought that the Saviour had the knowledge which He denies He had, and that He only withheld it; but such an explanation is its own condemnation. To say, again, that the reserve was only official, like that which prompted the Saviour's words, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now," is nothing more than a quibble. To say, further, that the knowledge was latent is to assume that Christ had the information at other times; and there is no sign of that. It is just to beg the whole question at issue. To say, moreover, that the ignorance cannot have been real, since it is ascribed to the Son of God and not to the Son of man, is to forget the reality of the union of Godhead and manhood in Him of whom on earth it could be said, He is "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father."¹ To say that the passage implies only ignorance of the special date—of the day and of the hour—but admits a general knowledge of the time, is only to admit the principle contended for; that is, if the knowledge possessed was gained by human acuteness, and if the knowledge not possessed was not possessed because it lay beyond that power. But to make the passage imply knowledge of month or year by supernatural power—though a thing not in itself impossible in the Saviour—is to interpret the saying after a very unsympathetic and utterly unintelligent fashion,

¹ John i. 18.

and means to miss the point of the emphasis Christ puts upon His words. Whilst, to say that Christ was ignorant on this one point only, is to grant the principle without reaping its results. Much better frankly to face the fact. Here was real ignorance.

The great Athanasius shows in his orations that he had no hesitancy in doing so. He supposed that Christ was ignorant as man though not as God. And Basil the Great, in his Epistles, takes up the same position; for he conceived that the Son had in His humanity only such supernatural knowledge as was the gift of the Father. Now, whether or not we accept the explanation these Fathers give, we ought at least to face honestly the transparent implication of the passage, as they do. We are shut up, as they were, to the fact, if not to their explanation of it.

But we do not need to rest on a single text like this, though it is so striking and so well known. There is much more evidence at command. For as Christ's ignorance was not confined to any case, or to one class of cases, but was the rule of His condition, there are very varied illustrations and numerous proofs of it. Let me take for demonstration, first of all, two instances, though they are somewhat intricate, in which we can see that our Lord did not know even the events which lay in His own immediate future; for they are specially valuable as being indirect, and therefore unintentional evidence. They are both cases in which two successive events are dependent on one another—in which the one springs directly out of the other as its occasion; and yet, in neither case, whilst the first of the events is in progress, is the Lord aware



of what it leads to. Both cases are concerned with the Sea of Galilee, the first being that occasion when Christ led His disciples into a storm, the second that on which He sent them again into a storm, after having fed the multitudes, and then came to their relief.¹

Let us look at the former. Jesus proposed to His disciples that they should take Him across the lake in a boat. They embarked, but as they were crossing a tempest arose, so violent that, in fright, they appealed to Him. He lay asleep, but they woke Him, and received safety (or at least conscious safety) by His rebuke of the wind and waves. Now, the question is, Did Jesus, when He invited them to take Him across, know of and contemplate this event? His motive, personally at least, seems to have been rest, and change of locality in His work. For Mark says,² "With many such parables spake He the word unto them . . . but privately to His own disciples He expounded all things;" adding, "And on that day when even was come, He saith unto them, Let us go over." Whilst Matthew says, just before he records this incident,³ "Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side." And in Luke we read⁴ that "there came to Him His mother and brethren, and they could not come at Him for the crowd;" after which there is added,⁵ "Now it came to pass on one of these days that He entered into a boat," etc. Did He then foresee the storm, and the use He should make of it as He crossed? To answer this we must keep in memory the fact that among His

¹ Matt. viii. 23; Mark iv. 35; Luke viii. 22.


² Matt. viii. 18.

⁴ Luke viii. 19.

³ Mark iv. 33-35.

⁵ Luke viii. 22.

disciples were fishermen, of riper age than Himself, and brought up on the shore of this very sea. We must remember that all His followers were Easterns, observers of weather signs, practical and not bookish. They must have seen no indications of a tempest, or at least of one threatening to be worse than usual ; else, knowing the suddenness and violence of the hurricanes on that lake, they would, after their ordinary way, have stated their objections. Now, they not only started with Him, they allowed Him to go to sleep. So there can have been no serious signs even for some time after the start. If Christ had any knowledge of the coming event, that must have been more than natural ; yet all traces of such knowledge must have been suppressed. There is nothing to warrant the irreverent fancy that He knew what was to happen, or that He fell asleep because He knew they would awaken Him, and He then could perform the miracle. The explanation of His conduct is to be found in His own answer to their terrified request, " Why are ye fearful ? have ye not yet faith ? " For, as an honest person, He never inculcated on others spiritual truths He could not vouch for by having passed them through His own experience. Such a pure soul could never have sent men away with a mere hearsay, where certitude was most vital. In the words He spoke to them He revealed the source of His own calmness. In belief of His Father's care by sea or land, He was able to sleep a wearied sleep. He had been evidently buried in a heavy slumber ; for He was awakened not by the tossing and the wind and spray, but by the disciples' violence. Suddenly He was ushered into such a storm of the



elements as had made even these hardy fishermen quail. Yet He remained wholly Himself; He stood fast, just as He had been able to fall asleep, by the faith in His Father's care. Which now, of these explanations, is the more consonant with Christ's character, the more natural, the more likely, not to say the more glorifying to Him? There can be no doubt. Jesus had no idea of the storm when He started, and so He had no idea He was to make any use of it.

Besides, we have arrived at the inference that sleep involved for Christ total ignorance of everything going on around Him; by it He was shut away from the outside world; passing into it, He daily left Himself in His Father's care, as wholly as when on the Cross He breathed forth His soul in death.

Let me now lead you to the second and somewhat more difficult case, in which Christ fed thousands, and then came walking to His disciples over the sea.¹ Here also the narrative makes it plain that our Saviour's action had its origin in the pressure of the multitudes. He went apart to get rid of them; but they tracked and followed Him. The question of food obtruded itself when evening was at hand. Whether Christ or the disciples made the suggestion which led to the event does not seem very clear, and, for our immediate purpose, does not matter very much. Certainly Christ had not contemplated the miracle when He started. He had no idea of it as the outcome of His action in departing; for He took genuine precautions to hide Himself, and we are bound to believe they seemed sufficient.

¹ Matt. xiv. 13-33; Mark vi. 30-52; Luke ix. 10-17; John vi. 1-21.

But, ere the disciples thought of the emergency, He had made up His mind to feed the people, because, as the records tell, the patience, attentiveness, eagerness, helplessness of the great crowd moved Him to pity. This is what John means when he says,¹ "For He (Christ) Himself knew what He would do." John desires to bring out that Christ's mind was made up, and that His questions to the disciples about the matter are not to be mistaken for ignorance, but to be looked on as Socratic.

The case is only half stated as yet, however. Christ, when He started, did not know what He would be led into. But as He did not see the miracle that was to come, so He did not see what was to come out of the miracle. After He had fed the crowd, its worldly enthusiasm led Him to get rid of His disciples at once, and to keep them from that influence by sending them across the lake. Then it led Him to dismiss the people as soon as possible, and retire for prayer to the hilltop. When He was thus occupied, or when He had just ended, the state of matters below flashed upon Him. Mark says graphically,² "Seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary to them, about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking on the sea." Now that word "seeing" represents something else than the action of ordinary sight. For John tells us that the disciples were twenty-five or thirty furlongs out when Christ came to them. Of course they were nearer Him when He first remembered them, but the difference ~~could~~ have been great; for we cannot imagine Him

¹ John vi. 8.

² Mark vi. 48.



proceeding at an ordinary rate, any more than in an ordinary way, when they were in such straits. To "see" must have meant an exercise less of the eyes than of the mind and heart.

But that is only the question about the power which enabled Christ to see; let us rather think of the suggestion which put the thought of His followers and their need into His mind at the time. The passage helps us. The evangelist assigns as the reason, "seeing them distressed, for the wind was contrary." That description is not tautological—saying that they were distressed because the wind was contrary—but logical, stating that He saw they were distressed, because He saw the wind was contrary. What the nature of the vision was—whether a blend of anxiety and imagination, or something akin to that by which the Saviour saw the world's glory in the mental glance of a moment, and by which He saw Satan fall like lightning to the ground, matters not in this connection. What we have to notice is that Christ had no thought of danger to His followers when He sent them out. He must have felt He had dismissed them into the danger. He is even reported to have said "farewell" to them. For Mark says,¹ "After He had taken leave of them He departed into the mountain to pray." So that He was more specially committed to care for them than merely because they had gone forth at His command. The raging wind, the swift-racing waves, the quick-rushing spindrift, all showed Him in the first dawn of morning both their position and its peril. His coming to them was, therefore, not a mere piece of prearranged

¹ Mark vi. 46. ἀποταξάμενος.

show, well thought out by superhuman knowledge and carried out carefully by Divine power; it was the result of love to them, and of the action of purely natural faculties sharpened by that to their utmost.

Here, then, there can be no doubt that the whole line of events was unforeseen by Christ, not only when He started, but when He had fed the thousands. Here, as in the previous instance, there can be no doubt which of the two possible explanations is the more apt and natural; and that Christ had in each of these cases to think by human power, or within the limits of His human faculties, only makes Him both real in His actions and attractive in His love.

I have adduced these two cases in proof of Christ's real ignorance of the events that lay in His near future. I have taken them, comparatively difficult though they are, because no one can suspect them to have been composed in this special interest.

However, if any further evidence than that which such cases afford were desired, it might be found, not in isolated facts, but in classes; for instance, in what might not inaptly, and for want of a better name, be called Christ's disappointments. Thus, when Jesus went forth to cure Jairus' daughter, there is no evidence that He expected to do anything but heal a girl who was no doubt very ill. But, as it turned out, He had not only to heal her, He had to bring her to life again. Many passages, again, prove Christ's desire for quietness in His work, and His failure to obtain it. For this end He retired to the Syrian coasts. "He entered into a house and would have no man

know it.”¹ But He evidently could not tell whether the people knew, or even whether they might not come to know. He took what He believed were adequate precautions—at least, the best which were open to Him. But He was mistaken about them; they did not secure the result. For, after all His care, “He could not be hid, but straightway a woman whose daughter,” etc. Similarly, when He could not enter Capernaum because of the extreme popularity of His work, He retired.² “And when He entered again into Capernaum after some days it was noised that He was in the house; and many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, no, not even about the door.”³ Two other cases⁴ need only be mentioned. In the one we find that Christ, having cured a leper, strictly enjoined silence on him; in the other He charged those who had brought a deaf and dumb man, whom He had cured, that they should tell no one. In both cases His command was disregarded and broken. Now I cannot think that, if Christ had foreseen such a result with certainty, He would have spoken as He did. Of course He may have suspected it, even strongly; but that was by human power, which left room for doubt, and obliged Him to use the keener endeavour to gain His object.

Akin to and confirmatory of what I have adduced, is the evidence to be found in some emotions which the Saviour showed. But for human ignorance He could have experienced no surprise—even as He could have

¹ Mark vii. 24, 25.

² Mark i. 45.

³ Mark ii. 1, 2.

⁴ Mark i. 44, vii. 36.

felt no disappointment. He shows surprise at the conduct and fears of His parents when He says, "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house."¹ Again, in the account of the agony in the garden, He is quite astonished when He comes to the disciples and finds them asleep after His injunction to watch. "He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What! could ye not watch with Me one hour?"² or, as Mark puts it, "Simon, sleepest thou?"³ In like manner He marvelled at the faith of the centurion,⁴ and the unbelief of the Jews in His own district.⁵ Surprise explains His state when watched by hostile Pharisees in a Galilean synagogue:⁶ "When He had looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, He saith," etc. Moreover, how could He have been harassed or provoked, as He often was by Pharisees and others, if He had been clear as to what was nearing Him? Once, after the Pharisees had come to Him asking a sign from heaven and tempting Him, we find that⁷ "He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? Verily I say unto you, there shall be no sign given unto this generation. And He left them." So surprised could Jesus be, so markedly emotional was He, that Keim thinks His failure and death due to the temper He exhibited during His visits to Jerusalem.

¹ Luke ii. 49.² Matt. xxvi. 40.³ Mark xiv. 37.⁴ Matt. viii. 10.⁵ Mark vi. 6.⁶ Mark iii. 5.⁷ Mark viii. 12.

There seems then to be strong ground for believing that Christ had, as a rule, no knowledge of things future, even of things in the near future, and that, too, although He was Himself to be affected by their occurrence.

Let us now see, however, whether Christ's knowledge of men and things around Him was limited also. That it was is certainly more surprising, but capable of even more complete and abundant proof.

Let us look first of all at the knowledge Christ had of men and things at a distance from Himself; for that ignorance should belong to Him there does not seem so very remarkable, the distant in space being akin to the remote in time, of which I have been speaking. I might bring forward a great many instances which would be real enough as illustrations but somewhat vague as proofs—such as the Saviour's evident ignorance of the actual state of the temple till He came to it on His first official visit; or His coming from Galilee to Jerusalem when His ministry in the north was done, that He might gauge the state of opinion as to Himself, and see the attitude which would be taken up towards Him by those in authority. But let me rather cite some more definite cases. In John we are told¹ that during Christ's early Judean ministry, in company with the Baptist in Perea, the Pharisees had already marked the Saviour because of His success. He, however, seems to have had no idea of this notice till the rumour of it reached Him in the ordinary way. For John, the evangelist, who certainly had no wish to

¹ John iv. 1-3.

hide the Saviour's Godhead, or to minimise the miraculous, wherever his Lord had shown it, tells us, "When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but His disciples), He left Judea." Further, the means by which Christ came into the possession of such knowledge is made still clearer to us. No one, as we shall yet see, was more important in the Saviour's eyes, as a man in whose position and work the hand of God could be seen pointing to Himself, than John the Baptist. Only when His forerunner was imprisoned did Christ begin His ministry in Galilee; and when the Baptist was executed, He foresaw the beginning of what was to be His own end. Yet how did He come to know even these two facts, which had such importance for Him? Just as any man might have done. For in Matthew we are expressly told,¹ "Now when He" (Jesus) "heard that John was delivered up, He withdrew into Galilee;" and again, further on,² "From that time began Jesus to preach." The same evangelist speaks in a similar manner of the other event also; for he says³ that John's "disciples . . . went and told Jesus. Now when Jesus heard it He withdrew from thence in a boat to a desert place apart." Thus, too, as Mark tells us,⁴ the Saviour came to know the state of Capernaum, though He had only left it a few hours before. For, after He had gone apart to pray, His disciples followed Him, and found Him, and said,

¹ Matt. iv. 12.

² Matt. iv. 17.

³ Matt. xiv. 12, 13.

⁴ Mark i. 37, 38.

"All are seeking Thee." That determined His plans; He saw Himself thrust out that He might apply a great general principle: "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth." Thus also He came to know the state of outside feeling toward Himself, though it lapped Him round. He had not disdained to eat with publicans and sinners, so the Pharisees grumbled, "And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them," etc.¹ In fine, Peter's wife's mother was ill, yet Christ was ignorant of it, even when in the same house with her, till they came and told Him. For "straightway when they" (He and others) "were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon . . . and straightway they tell Him of her."²

We have begun now to see that Christ's knowledge was limited in regard to events happening even quite close to Him. But the same rule applies to things happening in His presence. Surely no one, not even a careless reader of the Gospels, can fail to have remarked that our Saviour was just as dependent for information on the testimony of His senses—on His seeing and hearing, for instance—as were the ordinary men who surrounded Him. One is not so greatly surprised perhaps to hear that He did not know what happened behind Him. In the first chapter of John's Gospel we find the Baptist standing, and Jesus walking near at hand. The Saviour's back must have been toward the Baptist, as that prophet pointed his disciples onwards with the hint, "Behold the

¹ Mark ii. 17.

² Mark i. 29-31.

Lamb of God." For, when the two followed, we read, "Jesus turned and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?"¹ These words can only mean, that their eager pace soon overtook His slower footstep; and, His attention being caught by the quick, purposeful tread behind Him, He turned to see who the persons were, and in genuine ignorance (whatever His prayers were, or His hopes may have been), asked what their business with Him was. He had not heard the Baptist's statement, and was unaware of it. Once again; the story of the woman with an issue of blood, who touched the Saviour as He went to cure Jairus' daughter, is almost too well known to need mention. Everyone remembers how she came behind Him, how she touched the border of His garment, how she was made whole, and how the Saviour felt virtue had gone out of Him. All those around imagined He could not tell who touched Him; they thought of only an ordinary touch. And evidently their thought was so far true; for the Saviour made no denial. He did not feel an ordinary touch more than they did. But, still stranger, Christ knew someone had been cured; only He could not tell who, or of what, though the people were all before Him. Mark tells us that He looked round about to see.² Was it to read the face of the person, with its self-conscious joy, astonishment, shame, perhaps even guilt? Still He did not find out in this way what He wished. His emphatic declaration, "Someone did touch Me,"³ made the woman feel

¹ John i. 38.² Mark v. 30-32.³ Luke viii. 46.

she was no longer hid, and she then confessed. Perhaps a similar feature, seen in the case of the ten lepers who were healed on the borders where Galilee, Judea, and Samaria touched one another, is not so generally noticed. Yet there too the cry for help must have been addressed to Him when His back was turned, or when the ring of His surrounding disciples hid outside objects from His sight, or more likely when actual distance made the mumbling cry indistinct (they were "afar off"). For we read that after He had heard their cry, "When He saw them, He said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests."¹

Such cases as these do not surprise one. But one is surprised somewhat to find that the principle seen in them ruled all Christ's ordinary life. He had to gain information as to whatever happened near, just as any of those who stood beside Him needed to do. Nay, the great mass of the information by which He conducted His life had to be obtained by Himself on the spur of the moment. He gained it in the ordinary way, having been ignorant of it the moment before. He had to watch persons and events, to notice what was said and done. In no other way was He able to guide Himself, and know how He ought to speak or act. The presence of two boats,² for instance, suggested an extemporised pulpit, safe against the pressing crowds, and enabled Him to call His disciples to follow Him. At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew we read that, "Seeing the multitudes He

¹ Luke xvii. 12-14.

² Luke v. 2.

went up into the mountain.”¹ The same writer tells us that, “When Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side.”² Again he says that, “When Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd making a tumult, He said, Give place.”³ Mark tells that when Peter rebuked Christ, the Saviour, “Turning about and seeing His disciples, rebuked Peter.”⁴ Further on he relates in connection with the cure of the demoniac lad at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, “When Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit.”⁵ Luke gives like testimony. In the story of the widow of Nain’s son he tells us that, “When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said,” etc.⁶ In the case of the woman bound with a spirit of infirmity, he records that, “When Jesus saw her,” thus bound and bent, but expectant in the synagogue, “He called her and said unto her,” etc.⁷ In the same Gospel we read that Christ spake a parable to those who were bidden, “when He marked how they chose out the chief seats.”⁸ Again the same writer tells us most touchingly that, “When He drew nigh, He saw the city” (Jerusalem) “and wept over it, saying,” etc.⁹ And John adds his testimony to that of the others, for he tells us that, “When Jesus saw him” (the sick man of Bethesda) “lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He said,” etc.¹⁰ Other

¹ Matt. v. 1.² Matt. viii. 18.³ Matt. ix. 23.⁴ Mark viii. 33.⁵ Mark ix. 25.⁶ Luke vii. 13.⁷ Luke xiii. 12, 13.⁸ Luke xiv. 7.⁹ Luke xix. 41.¹⁰ John v. 6.

cases might be added, as, for instance, that type of which we have a specimen in the words, Christ "came forth and saw a great multitude, and He had compassion on them, and healed their sick,"¹ but it seems hardly needful. Surely evidences so numerous and incidental and varied, yet in their purpose so united and mutually helpful, ought to be enough to show us that, in those circumstances which fill the largest part of life for each of us, our Saviour had to dwell within, and act in accordance with, the narrow limits of humanity.

It may be interesting to add a special feature to those other more general ones. We find, on at least two occasions, what seems to have been the necessity of searching like other people to discover what He wanted. In the first instance, we find that, after the man who had been healed of his blindness in Jerusalem had confessed the Saviour, and so had been cast out of the synagogue, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and finding him" (of set purpose and with care, because He now knew the man's spiritual ripeness), "He said," etc.² This example, about the meaning of which there can be no doubt, will enable us to agree (with Paulus, against Strauss) in regard to the second case,³ that the finding of the place in the roll of the prophet Isaiah, within the synagogue at Nazareth, was not by accident or providence, but by intention; for the same Greek word is used in both cases.

One other, and not less interesting fact may be added—that the working of Christ's human powers was fallible, just like ours, and that thus mistakes were

¹ Matt. xiv. 14.

² John ix. 35.

³ Luke iv. 17.

possible. We find that,¹ "seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply " (to be compared in the Greek with that other haply—"lest haply they faint by the way"²), "He might find anything thereon: and when He came to it He found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season of figs."

What, however, appears to be more striking, when one considers the mission of the Saviour, is this: that the same principle which applies to His knowledge of the simplest events around Him, applies also to His knowledge of the spiritual state of the men and women with whom He had to deal. Much, for their salvation, depended on that. Yet there even He found Himself fettered, and had to obey the same limitations. He could not tell about the sight of the man whose eyes He had anointed, whether it had come completely back or not, because it did not depend on His power and will exclusively. Whether the man was healed or not, the Saviour had to exert Himself equally. He could not bring Himself to bless by halves; yet He could not bless except by the man's faith. The woman healed of an issue of blood was undistinguishable, as we have already seen, from the rest of the crowd, though she had faith and they had none. When the four friends brought their paralytic fellow, Christ saw their faith and only then acted. The Syro-Phœnician woman had first to show all her faith before Christ could know all that He could promise or might do for her. Jesus was ascertaining the faith of the father of the demoniac boy at the foot of the Mount of Trans-

¹ Mark xi. 13.

² Matt. xv. 32.

figuration when the approaching crowd induced Him to hasten the cure. And there is a large number of cases referring to mental emotions, mainly grumbling or questioning, which bear out the fact. As specimens, take such reports as "Jesus perceiving it (*i.e.* knowing it by the aid of His senses) said,"¹ "Jesus perceiving in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves,"² and, "perceiving it, He withdrew."³

Now, if any other evidence can make clearer and surer the point of which we have been speaking, it is the fact that Jesus was not only dependent on the testimony of His own faculties for the knowledge He had of things happening around Him, but, in consequence of their limited range and imperfect capacity, had to use the evidence of others, and rely on outside sources of knowledge. This is clearly seen in the questions He puts. Of course these do not all indicate ignorance on His part. That, as we saw before, John expressly implies. And the knowledge is plain in such rhetorical means of attracting attention, or of emphasising a statement as, "Seest thou these great buildings?"⁴ of which there could be no doubt; "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"⁵ where knowledge of a negative answer is implied; "What were ye reasoning in the way?"⁶ where the thing is asked in order that a lesson might be learned in the pangs of conscious guilt and shame; and in the testing of faith by such queries as these, to the Pharisees, "What did Moses command you?"⁷ to Bartimæus, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"⁸ to Philip,

¹ Matt. xxvi. 10.² Mark ii. 8.³ Matt. xii. 15.⁴ Mark xiii. 2.⁵ John ii. 4.⁶ Mark ix. 33.⁷ Mark x. 3.⁸ Mark x. 51.

"Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat?"¹ Yet what other interpretation than the desire of obtaining knowledge, which He needed and had not got, can explain such questions as, to the blind man, "Seest thou aught?"² or to the father of the demoniac lad, "How long time is it since this hath come unto him?"³ or to the two sons of Zebedee, "What would ye that I should do for you?"⁴ or to the Gadarene demoniac, "What is thy name?"⁵ or to Mary at Bethany, "Where have ye laid him?"⁶ or to Pilate, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning Me?"⁷ In fact, we find the two kinds of questions together in the interview at Cæsarea Philippi, and are able by their form to see the difference in the answer expected.⁸ "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" was not just a preliminary to, and means of starting the question which was to follow. It indicated at least real ignorance of particulars, along with the desire to know them, and inability in the circumstances to do anything else than depend on the testimony of others. The following question, "But who say ye that I am?" shows at once by its form the answer that Christ expected—one opposed to the last, one for which He had left room by giving Himself this time no designation, such as He had used in the previous case.

Now, does not this great accumulation of varied instances amount to positive proof that our Saviour had, as a rule, to depend for information on ordinary means, and that His knowledge was, like ours, really limited by His human mind? So far from the most of His knowledge

¹ John vi. 5.² Mark viii. 23.³ Mark ix. 21.⁴ Mark x. 36.⁵ Luke viii. 30.⁶ John xi. 34.⁷ John xviii. 34.⁸ Matt. xvi. 13.

being Divine or supernatural, the greater part of it must have been human, and gained as any other person might have gained it. So far from knowing all things, He became aware of even the things around, and that concerned Him, by the ordinary human processes.

The weightiest consideration of all, however, arises from the law of development in mind and body, which is recorded as marking Him. "He advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men."¹ This is not an argument like that from His own words and emotions, for that argument rests on particulars more or less numerous. It is an argument resting on a great regulative principle, which is represented as being constantly present, and moulding the nature of His whole growth. Nay, for our purpose this argument goes further than one might at first notice. For if it allows that a certain amount of ignorance marked Christ naturally, even after He was full grown, then, by asserting that a still greater amount of ignorance once hemmed Him in, and that less vitality of mental power was once possessed by Him, it renders any objection to His later state futile, and involves, in the repudiation of that state, the denial of His real or natural humanity.

Thus, when one reads Christ's life carefully, the difficulty is not to get but to avoid proof of, and to shut one's eyes to, His human ignorance. Meantime, therefore, we are fairly entitled to say, that as a rule at least, Christ's knowledge, like that of other men, was limited by His faculties, and that practically what knowledge He possessed He gained in the ordinary way.

¹ Luke ii. 52.

CHAPTER II

CHRIST'S SUPERNATURAL KNOWLEDGE

THE main object of the former chapter was to make clear that our Saviour in His humanity was not omniscient, and that much of His knowledge—in fact what seems to have been the mass of it—was gained by the same means as other men around Him might have used. But we have yet to see if that explains all the knowledge He shows Himself to have had. Whether His knowledge were wholly due to natural powers can, of course, be determined only by reference to the narrative of the facts. And anyone who reads that, even carelessly, knows that it contains a residuum, which seems to imply, on the Saviour's part, more than the knowledge an unaided man could have obtained. We are therefore forced, meantime at least, to term that knowledge "supernatural."

Of course we must proceed cautiously. We shall put aside at present, as we must consider them separately afterwards, all questions about our Saviour's knowledge of His own person and mission. Let us narrow the inquiry just now to what seems to be the supernatural knowledge He at times had of men and things around Him. In that way we shall be able to deal more easily with the subject.

It appears to us that many of the cases, which at first sight seem to fall into this class, can be explained on purely natural principles. But, in spite of that, there remain a few which it cannot be denied are valid.

For clearness in following what has yet to be seen in the subject, let me say that these cases are (1) Christ's first meeting with Peter; (2) His finding Philip; (3) His first interview with Nathanael; (4) His statement to the woman of Samaria; (5) His directions as to the draught of fishes, ere He called His disciples to follow Him; (6) the knowledge of Lazarus' death and resurrection; (7) obtaining the ass's colt, and (8) the upper room for the last passover; (9) His prediction of Peter's denial, and (10) of martyrdom; and (11) His prediction of the fate of Jerusalem.

Let us proceed to examine these cases.

1. We find Jesus saying to Peter,¹ as that apostle is led forward by his brother Andrew, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas." Now it is not the latter part of the statement that is remarkable, but the former. The latter part of it might have been the result of shrewd character-reading; specially so in this apostle's case, seeing that his rugged features doubtless set forth his rock-like and strong though irregular character. In fact, this explanation seems hinted at in the very expression, for we read that "Jesus looked upon him and said," etc. But the former part of it is remarkable, and beyond the power of any such explanation.

One sees what the impression on Peter was meant

¹ John i. 42.

to be, and feels some of it in reading the words. For of course Peter's name, Simon, was what Christ could not, as a mere man, have come to know at that time. If He had heard the name from the lips of Andrew on that first night when they stayed together, and had recognised the person by some characteristic description which had been given, Andrew would not have been deceived, nor would he have allowed his brother to be imposed on by such unworthy methods. Even if we should suppose that Andrew had incidentally given the information, and, thinking it unimportant, had forgotten he had done so ; and even if we admitted that Jesus, being quick witted, had noticed the statement, had mentally seen its possibilities of usefulness, and had used it when the time came, yet we must see that the Saviour also needed in that case to be sure that Andrew had forgotten what he had said, and must have been conscious that, whether the process were worthy or not, He at least ran a great risk of being discovered and discredited. In fact, power thus gained could not have been kept up ; and a person using such methods, even if these had not been discovered, would never have secured the love or kept the esteem of people as Jesus did. If in any way Jesus had learned the name in Galilee before coming south (or later, from Andrew), He might have created by these words a cheap and unworthy impression, but would have acquired no real or lasting ascendancy ; His influence would have been temporary or waning at the best, and would never have produced in men the fruits of which it afterwards showed itself capable.

Both Jesus on the one hand, and John and Andrew on the other, had the official testimony and the guidance of the Baptist to one another—the guidance of a finger pointed, and of the words,¹ “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” the guidance guaranteed by the message direct from heaven,² “On whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw and bear witness.” Would it then be unnatural to suppose that both to assure Jesus that He was being guided to the right man, and to give Peter evidence of a kind such as his two friends had got, that this new, untried person was all they had been hoping for, and one to whom he might give himself up freely, this supernatural knowledge was let in on Christ’s ignorance? The thing seems likely, since this came for the purpose of His mission, and in circumstances where His human power could not aid Him. In fact, His powers of self-guidance for such objects were only coming into experience. If that were so, the Saviour must have recognised that this influx of special knowledge suited, and consequently was sent for, this particular end.

2. Let us now pass to the following verse,³ where something similar is seen in the case of Philip. Here we read that Jesus “was minded” (*ἠθέλησεν*) “to go forth into Galilee”; that is, He had made up His mind for it, and allowed nothing to hinder Him in carrying it out. Then, having found Philip, who was of Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter, He called that man to follow. To begin with, we have a note of express intention on

¹ John i. 29.

² John i. 33.

³ John i. 43.

the part of Christ, instead of the vague, irresolute waiting seen before ; as if the aid imparted to Him on the previous occasion, or some other now conveyed, had given Him confidence in Himself. The Saviour is represented as having made up His mind to go to a certain district, after which He did a certain work there. Now, what led Him to form this intention of going north to Galilee ? If Andrew and Peter had told Him of the ripeness of their fellow-townsmen, and of this special one among them, even their statement would have been a slim foundation for the strong, undoubting resolution He had formed, and on which so much rested. But there is no evidence that He relied on anything they had told, nor even that they had told anything He could have relied on. The evidence seems, in fact, all opposed to that ; the wording almost implies that He went contrary to their will. Possibly they did not wish to leave John, even though they wished to become attached to Himself. The tone of the passage gives no hint that anyone had pointed to the line of procedure He followed, or that the rest approved of it. The impression left with the reader is that the whole originated in a determination reached by the Saviour individually, and that it was one of which he was willing, nay, was compelled, to assume the whole responsibility. Most likely it was one which surprised His followers, and did not command their sympathy. It was opposed by them, till the firm expression of their Master's will overcame all objections.

This being clear, we get some light on the second part of the narrative—the finding and calling of Philip.

If matters were as we have suggested, it seems implied that Christ had said nothing to the others at that stage about His object, and that they had said nothing to Him about Philip or his ripeness; if, indeed, Philip, though a townsman, was known in his spiritual feelings to Andrew and Peter. In fact, it seems that Christ had no idea of His object Himself. There is no indication that these men had said they wished to remain beside John; and Jesus never showed the least desire to draw men away from John to Himself, rather the reverse. The passage says simply, when it tells of His initial resolution, that He had made up His mind to go to Galilee. It does not particularise Bethsaida. That He went to that town may have been due to the disciples, or it may not; but in the first instance His only thought was of Galilee in general. Now it does not seem as if that idea was roused by the hope of finding other prepared souls in Galilee; it seems that these were rather to be expected in John's neighbourhood. Yet if we look at the way in which the two parts of the statement are put together, we see that, in the writer's mind at least, they were connected together; that he thought the obtaining of Philip was the fruit—the reward—of the resolution to which Christ came that day. Thus we have to ask ourselves whether the discovery of Philip was in the Saviour's mind when He started for the north country. Surely not. It seems rather that Christ again followed the same guidance which had been given Him the day before, and that that explains the firmness of His decision, as well as the direct initiative He took in the matter. It seems that His resolution was the result of super-

natural impulse, but of an impulse which left its own end and application vague at the time, and which appealed for an obedience possible only by faith. Indeed it looks even more like the removal of Christ Himself than of His disciples from the Baptist's side. It would appear as if a finger directed Him thence that He might rely on His own power, instead of on that of the Baptist. And Philip was the reward of obedience to it. The obedience made this clear, that followers were not to be obtained simply by means of John, or success by depending on John, but in Christ's own right. So we conclude that we can take the passage only as it literally puts the matter. We must hold that Jesus had no idea more definite when He started than that of going to Galilee, and that by some means or other He had decided when they came there to go to Bethsaida, and had set His heart on Philip. Let us try, then, to find out what could have decided Him, and what made Him so sure of Philip.

First we may be reminded that there need be no difficulty as to the meaning of the word "find." The word, as we have seen, implies (p. 18) no accident, but care and effort, according to a formed intention. Christ found Philip, because He wished him rather than any other. He must have made up His mind, therefore, as to the man's fitness, at a stage earlier than that in which He entered the man's presence. He did not come to His decision after any interview with the man; indeed there is no hint of it, and therefore no right to assume it. What led Him to be so sure, then, in seeking the man, and to speak with such undoubting authority? It may be said that most likely the disciples would have spoken of

their townsman and his fitness, but that does not explain Christ's resolution; because, for Him to have relied on that only, would have been to rely on a broken reed, and to have become a mere tool in their hands, moulded by them rather than moulding them. Now Christ never let His work out of His own hands. As in the case of the apostolate, He called unto Him whom He would. Sometimes Christ called men to Him simply to test them, to make them show if they were right and ripe or not: He called some, like the rich young ruler, whose heart He knew, and some of whose state he was wholly ignorant, like the man whose answer was, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." At other times He called men He had never spoken to, like Levi, but whom He knew to be ripe. So here He called Philip. That He should have called this man was really no more than that He should have sought him. He went straight to him. He did not call him only to test him, perhaps to be refused and so dishonoured before the new, untried disciples. The Saviour called Philip, as one who would respond, and whom it was worth while to seek.

Now what gave Him that assurance? The statement of His disciples might go some length in giving Him a partially reliable account of the man's condition, but this neither could be enough to trust for calling as a disciple one who was to be an apostle, nor could it give assurance in regard to the answer which His command, as that of a wholly unknown, unaccredited person, would receive. Here I think we find help from the first part of the passage, and from the explanation we have already

found of that. Apply to it what I may call the law of suggestion, which we see operating in the cure of the blind man of Jerusalem.¹ Jesus saw that man sitting by the roadside, and was passing without remark, not because the man made no appeal—the man was an incarnate appeal—but because action was dangerous and unwarranted by any evidence. When, however, the apostles put their ignorant question, “Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?” Christ saw the need of a miracle, for He saw its effect—“that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”² He recognised God’s will in their suggestion. Apply this principle to the passage we have been examining. Then it is clear any words the disciples may have uttered about Philip might have implied suggestion, even though they conveyed no authority.

Let us go back, then, to the first half of this incident. There we see that the Saviour started under the influence of a resolution, in which no man at least shared, and for which there was no apparent reason, though it was markedly clear and strong. The resolution, coming as it did from superhuman sources, could justify itself at first to others only in the very general way of stating Galilee as its terminus. As Christ went forth in faith because of it, He believed His way would be made plain, and that the reason would be shown, both why He was sent away from John and why into Galilee. He believed God would not fail, and dishonour Him before His raw disciples. So if their account of Philip came then—and I cannot help thinking it did; because what

¹ John ix. 2.

² John ix. 3.

was more natural than for the disciples, if they found Christ vague, to tell Him of their town, its people and their ripeness, or even for them to put that forward as a natural and an interesting topic—Christ could not fail to see in it God's response to His faith in starting, and the reason why His Father had sent Him into Galilee. He was not to depend on John for disciples, but on His Father's providence. And in seeking the first of them He believed God would work in the heart of Philip a conviction corresponding to that which had caused Him to come, such a conviction as would lead Philip when claimed to respond. Here then was knowledge as truly supernatural as in the former case, though of quite a distinct type.

3. A similar case follows when Philip brings Nathanael.¹

There can be no doubt that Christ had never met this man, and was wholly unacquainted with him. What knowledge of his history Christ shows, He shows not only before the disciples, but to them directly. It is impossible in this case to entertain the supposition that He had derived information from them, and was imposing on the man.

From the way in which the interview between Philip and Nathanael is introduced as a preface to the meeting of the latter with Christ, we cannot doubt that it gives the key to the new-comer's character, and that the knowledge of it is regarded by Christ as the means of getting at the man's heart. The knowledge was like that already noticed in reference to Peter; it was given for its own special purpose.

¹ John i. 45.

Nathanael had met Philip's express personal testimony with incredulity, or at least with doubting wonder. Not that he had no wish for the Messiah; one must imagine the reverse of him, as a friend of Philip; one cannot but imagine that he was likeminded to the man who went straight to him with the news. But he saw difficulty in the case, and would not act dishonestly. When his soul was not convinced, he could not say he was satisfied, even though the object was that which he most wished. As one who desired the conviction, which could only come by personal experience, he accepted Philip's invitation—Come and see. And he got such an assurance as they all, Philip included, seem to have had already. When he came into view the Saviour at once took the first word of discourse, and said to the others around Him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael cannot have been far off; for, though the words were spoken to the disciples, they were accepted and answered by, as probably they were really intended for, the man himself. He rather resented what was said. It might conceivably be a sneer at himself because of his doubt. Eagerly the heart of the earnest man must have searched the words of Christ to see if he were misjudged. Astonishment filled him, for in this knowledge of him was an experience he could neither deny nor explain. He asked in wonder and with lingering doubt, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Now, what faith the man had at this stage was weak, for it rested on miraculous knowledge only, and Christ wished to strengthen it; He wished to have it (and perhaps that of His other disciples also)

resting on His moral power. Accordingly, He showed this man that He knew him further back, and more intimately, than even his friend Philip did; for He had seen him under the fig tree in prayer. He had known and judged him then. He had not misunderstood his honest words, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" He had interpreted these, and had judged him by his earlier and more characteristic position of spiritual need; so now He did not sneer at this man as a religious doubter, but received him as a spiritual inquirer. Only He wished the man to understand that this miraculous knowledge which He had of him existed for the immediate purpose of inducing faith, and that the moral evidence appealing to his deepest needs would be more convincing and satisfactory. He wished to bring out that His grace would eclipse His mere knowledge and power; it would draw the man's eyes and keep his heart by its attractions. He wished the inquirer to see that he was as graciously as thoroughly known, that the best view and not the worst was taken of him, and that the desire was to help, not to criticise him. Christ wished this man to see that the knowledge He had of him was for the sake of moral effect, was in order to produce faith; though faith was not to be allowed to rest on mere wonder, but was to found itself on moral conviction. And this conviction was to come when an even greater wonder was made plain, namely, not Christ's knowing him, but his knowing Christ; not supernatural knowledge of man, but miraculous knowledge of God; a wonder not of power but of grace.

Christ thus pointed to this knowledge as superhuman; at the same time He indicated that it was something not

to be abused. At best it was a proof only to young and needy faith, and a means to something far better. Christ showed what this knowledge was to Himself by indicating what He conceived it should be to Nathanael and the other disciples—not the rule of life, but for exceptional circumstances; not common, but rare; given and taken only with a view to conditions more spiritual and lasting.

Here, then, there must have been a real vision of Nathanael under his fig tree, along with a full knowledge of his conversation with Philip; nothing else will satisfy the narrative.

4. Let us now pass on to the next occasion, which cannot be understood without presupposing still this supernatural knowledge on Christ's part.

We read that the Saviour said to the woman of Samaria,¹ "Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." Here the question is, how did Christ come to know the number of this woman's husbands? Her character He might have seen in her air or gait, her dress or manner; but as an utter stranger He could have had no information about her husbands. The effect produced on the woman was unmistakably the same as that left on Nathanael in similar circumstances. The woman's wondering word,² "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did," corresponds exactly to Nathanael's question, "Whence knowest Thou me?"³ She too regarded the knowledge Christ had of her as, on one point at least, supernatural.

So we ask how or when that knowledge came to

¹ John iv. 17, 18.

² John iv. 29.

³ John i. 48.

Jesus. The conversation He began, and the request it contained, cannot but be taken as *bonâ fide* in the simplest sense. He rested because He was weary; because He was thirsty He asked drink. There is no sign that at that time He knew the spiritual development matters would take. If we go further back we find that He had started on the journey which led Him through the city not by any wish of His own, but because of the feelings of others towards Him. He had heard that the Pharisees had come to know that He was making more converts than even the Baptist, and on that account He felt constrained to leave Judæa. "He must needs pass through Samaria," because it was on the direct route northwards to His destination, Galilee. There is no sign that He had this supernatural knowledge till He uses it; there is no source visible by which it came; yet He seems to have had it by the time He began to speak to the woman about her husband; there seems no other reason for introducing the topic. Most likely, then, when she tried by general statements and questionings to avoid His aim of leading her to life eternal, the knowledge was imparted to enable Him to convince her, and He at once recognised the use to which it might be put. He was guided, and she was convinced.

5. Let us now pass on to a similar case, but one found outside John's Gospel.¹

The case is that of the first miraculous draught of fishes. In it superhuman knowledge was certainly displayed. Nothing else will enable us to understand how Jesus could tell experienced fishermen where to cast their nets

¹ Luke vi. 5.

in broad sunlight, after an unsuccessful night's fishing. Peter, as well as James and John, knew the lake and its possibilities well. Yet, though Peter had already heard Christ's wonderful word as to himself, though he had already seen more than one miracle by Him, and one at least that closely touched himself, he felt as he had never felt. The superhuman element had never been so emphatic and clear in his view. "Depart from me," he cried; "for I am a sinful man, O Lord;"¹ and the wonder of his friends was evidently as real as his was. In him and them Christ gained His object by means of the impression thus produced.

Christ had seen the use and object of the superhuman knowledge given Him as to the shoal of fishes. He wished to withdraw these men, His followers, from their ordinary fishing that they might become fishers of men. The step was important and difficult. It must be taken in such a way that they should never repent of it. The trial was great, for Peter had a household, and John and James a home. The sacrifice was real, in a worldly way perhaps greater for the two latter than for the former, though Peter does not fail to let us see afterwards that he had felt it too. At anyrate, the Saviour aimed at producing the impression which enabled them to follow Him. When they followed they came with the enthusiasm of a faith and hope which could not be overturned, because it was born of convictions deeply rooted in their own personal experience. He drew them on, and they went after Him to become fishers of men.

¹ Luke v. 8.

Let us now proceed to consider the passages which show the possession of supernatural knowledge by Christ towards the end of His life.

6. As the first of these cases, let us take Christ's knowledge of the death of Lazarus.¹ In the account there is distinctly implied the possession of a supernatural knowledge guiding the Saviour.

There is no evidence that Jesus left Jerusalem to be far from Bethany, where Lazarus died. Rather, we see from the preceding narrative² that He had been compelled to flee for safety. The Jews "sought to take Him, and He went forth out of their hand." He had no part in the decision. As a fact, it was contrary to His desires. But there was nothing to keep Him in the city, and as no signs yet appeared of His betrayal, He had to take refuge from the malignity of His enemies by flight.

The first intimation He got that Lazarus was ill, was by the special messenger whom the sisters sent. Though He had gone away ignorant of what was to come, no sooner was the message delivered than He showed the possession of supernatural knowledge. At once He recognised that though there had been no reason to remain, there was now reason to return. The claim that was made upon His love was providential and from God. But then He had the choice of going back and at once restoring His friend, or of waiting till he should die (if that were to be) and then restoring him. Without hesitation He chose the latter; nay, on the spur of the moment, He decided for the latter. He foresaw the

¹ John xi.

² John x. 39.

death and the use to which He could put it ; He felt love constraining His action, even though that action ultimately involved His own death.

He decided to allow Lazarus to die. Now, the authority implied in allowing another to die was as remarkable as the right to go to a voluntary death Himself. However, the superhuman knowledge was something distinct from this Divine authority, and of course inferior to it. The supernatural knowledge was simply the confidence, shown after two days, that Lazarus was dead. It could not have arisen out of the symptoms mentioned in the message, else the disciples might have known it too. Yet Christ had no doubt of it ; He spoke confidently. The assurance He had about the coming miracle was, of course, quite a different matter, and represented merely His faith in God.

We must read the fifth verse of the chapter, " Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus," as an explanatory parenthesis in brackets ; then the word " therefore," which begins the sixth, becomes explanatory of the fourth verse. Because the illness was for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified, John adds, giving Christ's intention, " Therefore Jesus, when He had heard that Lazarus was sick, abode at that time two days in the place where He was."

We infer, then, that the fundamental idea in Christ's mind was that the illness of His friend was to be for the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified. We infer, too, that along with that more general idea there was communicated in the circumstances the knowledge that in two days Lazarus would die. The second of

these interpreted the first, and gave it special meaning for Christ. He saw in it the intimation that, in the first instance at least, God intended death for this man. But in the appeal made by the two sisters, His love recognised a providence which modified that view, for it pointed by faith to the man's resurrection, and opened out in vista the most wonderful way of glorifying God. So our Saviour did not here enter on His line of action merely because of love to the man ; for that would have prompted the prevention of, rather than the recovery from, death. He entered on it because of the view He took of the best way of glorifying God in the circumstances. The knowledge of His friend's death, which, as we have seen, was specially given, became by this means practical and helpful. No explanation of it is sufficient which supposes it arbitrary in the imparting and used only for parade. By it the Saviour felt entitled to enter the stream of death with the assurance that He had His Father's approbation of the time He had chosen.

7. Let us now examine the incident of the ass's colt, which is found in connection with our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. How did our Lord know of the beast? how was He able to indicate the means to procure it? The answer must be, I think, that He knew supernaturally.

Matthew and John¹ imply as their view that Jesus sent His two disciples on this mission in order to fulfil the prophecy,² "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : He is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding

¹ Matt. xxi. 5 ; John xii. 14, 15.


² Zech. ix. 9.

upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass." If that be so, the act was an act of faith on the Saviour's part; while the supernatural knowledge given was God's authentication of the act by which His Son identified Himself in the eyes of all as Messiah.

The knowledge can hardly on any supposition have been natural. Even if the ass and colt had belonged to a pilgrim who was known to have passed earlier, yet the knowledge of where the beast would be found, and, above all, of the conversation consequent on finding it, must have been specially given. To suppose Christ said to Himself that on such an occasion no pilgrim would refuse Him, is a theory too vague to account for even what it touches; whilst it leaves wholly unanswered the question as to how Christ foreknew the place the ass would be in, as well as the subsequent conversation with its owners. For Him to have secured the result by deliberate arrangement, delicately hid and thereafter questionably used, would have been not only foolish but deceitful. If the knowledge could not be inferred, and was not matter of mere prearrangement, then it must have been the result of supernatural information given to confirm His desire that the prophecies concerning Him should be fulfilled.

8. Another case presents points of very remarkable likeness to the one we have just been considering, and admits of no different explanation. This is the incident of the finding of the upper room for the passover, which is related by all the three synoptists.¹ The peculiarity there had its origin in Christ's desire to hide from Judas the meeting-place for the supper, lest the betrayal should

¹ Matt. xxvi. 17-19; Mark xiv. 12-16; Luke xxii. 7-13.



be before the right time. In the former case the difficulty was to see how Christ knew where the ass would be standing, that the owners would be at hand, and how they would speak and act. In this case the difficulty is to see how Christ knew that His disciples would meet that particular man bearing water—men bearing water being so common that evening, because the feast was at hand; besides, that man must be a servant, who would lead them to a householder, willing to give his upper room to their Master. It may be true that, as a rule, no householder would have refused his guest-chamber to a pilgrim for such a purpose; yet there were those in Jerusalem who would have refused theirs to Christ. Further, we must observe that Christ preferred his request not in His character as a pilgrim, but as Master and Lord. It may have been important for the peace of the supper talk that the master of the house should be a believer; it may be that he was one, known to Christ though to no one else. Still, after He inferred that this man's servant would be out on the night's work, and that the master of such a servant would be employed preparing his house for the occasion, how could He know that His disciples would meet the servant of the right man—a believer, and yet the owner of a house which Judas would not suspect? Prearrangement is here out of the question. Neither had there been time, since Judas had agreed with the priests about the betrayal, for Christ to have arranged with this person, nor could there have been any opportunity for it. In fact, Christ had no choice in the matter, but was forced to make the arrangement by the indiscreet question

which His anxious disciples put in the presence of Judas ; and to help Him at that moment He received the knowledge He used. Their astonishment is hinted at, or rather the wonder of the whole thing is expressed, when we are told¹ that the disciples "went forth, and found as He had said unto them." The knowledge was imparted to enable Him to rule His death, to choose its hour, and go to it without compulsion. Most probably the householder who recognised Christ as Master was already a secret disciple, but this knowledge which the Saviour had of him and his actions was supernatural.

9. Nor can we attach less than supernatural value to the prediction which Christ uttered as to Peter's denial. His statement,² "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat," may have been just one way of stating His perception of the evident and confessed difficulties Peter felt in facing his Lord's death. The contrasted phrase too, "But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not," may have been, like the predicting of Lazarus' resurrection, an assurance rising out of mere faith that God heard His prayer. But that He could say, even with His knowledge of Peter and of what was about to happen to Himself, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice,"³ could not be the result of mere calculation or observation.

I do not dwell on the matter of the cock-crow, but

¹ Mark xiv. 16.

² Luke xxii. 31, 32. The *ὑμᾶς* may refer to all the disciples. But that the Saviour had Peter specially in view becomes clear from the following phrase, "I made supplication for thee" (*περὶ σοῦ*).

³ Mark xiv. 30.

I emphasise the isolation of this case from that of the ten others, and the preparation in it for dealing effectually with the character of this remarkable man. The facts in regard to Peter point not to a general truth deduced, as in the case of the others, from a mere principle, such as, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad,"¹ or "All ye shall be offended in Me this night,"² but to a special vision of the future of the man and of his detailed action in it.

10. There are still two incidents which remain to be dealt with. These belong to what was as yet the somewhat distant future. The former of them comes suitably after the last case, for it refers to the martyrdom of Peter:³ "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hand, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." The words refer plainly to something far off. But John says⁴ they referred to the manner of death Peter was to die. "Now this He (Christ) spake, signifying by what manner of death he (Peter) should glorify God." The thing, therefore, can hardly be a mere inference from the law of place in the kingdom according to merit; nor can it imply simply that to be greatest in the kingdom and sit next the Master the apostle must be baptized with his Master's baptism. The statement is too definite for being a mere inference. Still less was it suggested by the general thought, that because the Master was hated His followers would be hated also; for that principle applied equally to all of them, and contained nothing distinctive of any one. These words were, in fact, like the other prediction as to this apostle,

¹ Mark xiv. 27. ² Matt. xxvi. 31. ³ John xxi. 18. ⁴ John xxi. 19.

special, and calculated to tell on him increasingly. As with all genuine prophecy, their meaning is not so clear beforehand that the fulfilment would be either hurried or prevented by it; still it is so put that the fulfilment could be clearly recognised by John afterwards. To Peter the saying must have been a mystery of hope, till the hour arrived when it became a word of comfort.

11. The other allied case is that in which Christ foretells the fall of Jerusalem.¹ The passage is quite simple. It has no reference whatever to the end of the world; but its language is too special to allow us to look on it as a merely ideal statement of judgment, about to come on a half-crushed people, from the iron hand of Rome. "The days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee,"—very unlikely, when the surroundings of the city are considered,—“and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” If these words are Christ's—and they bear no trace of being the evangelist's *post eventum* description of the affair—we can have little doubt that Jesus had had vouchsafed to him a vision of the fate of the holy city. As it stands, the picture implies prophetic, *i.e.* supernatural knowledge.

So far as our judgment goes, these eleven cases comprise all those in which our Lord indicates the possession of any supernatural knowledge as to men and things

¹ Luke xix. 43, 44.

around Him. Their type, however, is, for my purpose, more important than their number


First of all, it will be noticed that they do not belong to John's Gospel exclusively. Most of them do, but some are mentioned in the synoptists likewise, whilst one at least is altogether peculiar to these three first Gospels, but related by all three of them. Thus the type of case we have been considering cannot be got rid of by any easy-going repudiation of the Fourth Gospel. It is quite inaccurate to say, like Keim, that the synoptists differ from the fourth evangelist in preserving strictly the limits of Christ's creaturehood. But it is just as misleading, if not so inaccurate, to say with Horton that if we had had only the Fourth Gospel, we would not have known of any development in Christ's mind.

The second thing I notice is, that Jesus gave no evidence of the possession of supernatural knowledge, except by the practical use He made of it. Had it not been for what we saw in the previous chapter, the possibility might have been entertained that He had a large store of it in reserve. But in view of what we saw, we are shut out from looking on these eleven cases as a few rarely manifested specimens; we are bound to believe them solitary or singular instances, inbursts of light on the usual darkness of true human nature. They were quite exceptional, therefore, and so for each there must have been a valid reason to be found in its circumstances.

This leads us to notice, in the third place, that this supernatural knowledge had a suitable practical end to vindicate it on every occasion in which it was used. It

either effected something otherwise impossible, or secured something quite uncertain. Christ recognised the aid and its purpose. As a help, it was purely incidental ; its use was quite transient. Christ never overvalued it because it was rare, but He felt He was not entitled to neglect it when given. The vindication of His possession of it is the use He made of it. He had, as we saw already in the case of Nathanael, a more wonderful knowledge—one that impressed Him, and, as He thought, should impress men too, more deeply. By this supernatural knowledge, moreover, He could impress Peter, and Nathanael, and the woman of Samaria, and the disciples by the lake of Tiberias in the beginning of His ministry. By it He could impress Peter, as well as the rest of His apostles, towards the end. Nay, He found guidance and help by it Himself. At first, when He was untried and inexperienced, it confirmed His actions ; and at the end, when staggering under the load of responsibility borne by His frail humanity, it upheld Him. To Him it was as a sacrament from heaven, whilst He occupied Himself among the details of His great calling.

Apart from the three last cases which were noticed, the other eight instances divide themselves between the beginning of Christ's public life, when He was untried Himself and without repute of men, and the end, when so much trembled in the balance and depended upon what He did, when the cunning and hatred and power of men were arrayed against His holy purpose. As we have seen, the object of the information they imply is clear by their position in the history. Nor is it difficult to see the meaning of that which was given in the other



three cases. The effect of the repeated sayings about Peter is not doubtful ; and it is easy to understand that if the account of the destruction of Jerusalem—then not so very far off—had been less definite, it would scarcely have received from a prejudiced public the credit to which it was entitled, or have impressed them in favour of Christianity as Christ Himself desired.

The object, then, of such supernatural or prophetic enlightenment is an ample answer to Strauss' statement "that He (Christ) should be acquainted with the most trivial details, with the adventitious history of obscure individuals, is an idea that degrades Him in proportion to the exaltation of His prophetic dignity." The supernatural knowledge Christ possessed came for the occasion, and was used by Him for special ends, through the recognition of what it was fitted to carry out in connection with His aim.

CHAPTER III

CHRIST'S APPARENT SUPERNATURAL KNOWLEDGE

WE have seen that the supernatural knowledge which enlightened the human ignorance of our Lord was small in amount, seldom given, and even then only for the practical needs of the moment. We have, in fact, admitted only eleven cases of it. But on many more occasions in His life Christ seemed to have it. These instances we must now deal with. We shall see that they may all be disposed of more or less easily in another way, a way that is more natural, and I think almost more wonderful—by the marvellous perfection of Christ's spiritual faculties.

Before taking any cases in illustration of what is meant, let us examine a text which will enable us to understand this remarkable power of Christ. In it we shall find the fountainhead of His knowledge of men spiritually, and the clue to His treatment of them.

We read that when Jesus was at Jerusalem,¹ "many believed on His name, beholding His signs which He did. But Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, for that He knew all men, and because He needed not that anyone should bear witness concerning man" (*περὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*

¹ John ii, 23-25.

—not a man, or men, or even these men merely): “for He Himself knew what was in man” (*ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ*—generic knowledge by means of principle). Here we see that Jesus had a comprehensive and thoroughgoing view of human nature, and that to Him it appeared a thing tainted by evil, even rendering men quite unreliable. Further, we see that this conviction was such as enabled Him to gauge men, and act discreetly towards all whom He met. Both these points appear from the passage quoted. But illustration of them might be found in the statement which our Lord made to Peter when that apostle tempted him to avoid the death of the Cross:¹ “Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.” In Christ's view, it seems as if to be just like other men meant to be kin in state of soul to Satan rather than to God. And by the aid of this view He was able to judge His apostle unerringly.

Now this knowledge is not said by John to be supernatural. If it had been a mere piece of information, furnished to Jesus as part of His outfit spiritually, it would not have been any real aid; for, in order that it might be applied correctly to every case, supernatural guidance would certainly have been needed. The varieties of form, and the deceptive colouring in which human evil wraps and hides itself, would not otherwise have been penetrated. The tool might have been good, but the hand would have lacked strength and skill, and the wrist flexibility, in using it. The knowledge spoken of in the text was, however, gained by

¹ Matt. xvi. 23.

a long and painful experience, and so became conviction ; it grew on Christ, and constantly remained with Him ; it gave proof of its correctness increasingly. By it Christ was kept from reasoning on wrong lines in His constant need of judging men. By it He was led safely through the deceitful intricacies of current religious profession.

Christ's deep and clear experience, which thus grew up with, and became part of Himself, was the source both of the opinion He formed about human nature, and of the expertness He showed in judging the character of men. He gradually attained to settled convictions as experience widened and ripened, and with these came the skill to apply them. He sat for thirty years with His eyes open as the world passed by, and this was the result. He had not lived in vain, when He was sure men needed to be saved. He was as eager to work for that as He had been when only twelve years old ; but now, at thirty, He was fitted for it.

It is true some of Christ's expressions seem to indicate that He took a less severe view of human nature than that one of which I have been speaking would imply. To Him the people were also like sheep without a shepherd. They were to Him as much an object of pity as of blame. They had been grossly misled by those who ought to have known better. He saw those learned in the law imposing burdens hardly to be borne, but refusing to lift their little finger to lighten these. He said,¹ "They are blind guides," but He added,

¹ Matt. xv. 14.

"and if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." So He pitied the common people, and in a measure exculpated them. He condemned the Pharisees with "the greater condemnation," because they neither entered in themselves nor allowed others to do so. Only, the people were not less in need of a Saviour, even if less culpable. They could not be relied on, just because they had such degraded hearts. In this, Galilee and Jerusalem were alike. Thus, though Christ pitied the common people, He never forgot their need; He had not else been able to pity them. He kept Himself right, because He guided Himself by principle; He interpreted men by manhood. What was natural was not good, was corrupted and twisted by the sin which was in it. Only what was of Divine origin was good. If the fruit were bad, the tree must be bad, and must be made good ere the fruit would be good. Christ never expected goodness in the wrong place, or mistook what it implied when He met it. He never expected to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.

Now it was this knowledge which Christ had of human motives, and this skill which He had in analysing them, that enabled Him to do a great many things, which, to our dulled conceptions and imperfect spiritual powers, appear the result of supernatural knowledge.

Let us turn to this class of incidents, and see how they show that careless reading is responsible in some cases for the misunderstanding of the passage; but that in other instances the mistake is due to forgetfulness of that wonderful blend of intellectual perception and

spiritual appreciation, which, as we have just found, was so strongly marked in Christ.

1. We read as to the infirm man at Bethesda, that "Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case."¹ We have only to mark that the statement is not made that Jesus knew the man had been thirty-eight years an invalid, or even that Jesus came to know that. The text refers only to the fact that Jesus came, by what He saw in the man before Him, to know that this person had been ill a long time. If this information had been supernatural, there is no reason why it should not have contained the exact number of years. Then it would have influenced all present. But the knowledge which came was meant to influence Christ and not others. He looked and was touched, just as when the ten lepers cried to Him. The knowledge of the man's long illness came by the look, and the pity roused by that caused Him to heal the man.

2. We read that when Jesus was sending out His disciples, He said,² "When they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." When this passage is carefully read, there is seen to be no room in it for assuming supernatural knowledge. The statement was nothing more than the result of Christ's observation, and of His judgment on the things around. It had reference to the things which He and His disciples had in hand, and none whatever to His "coming again." It makes no

¹ John v. 6,

² Matt. x. 23.

mention of the Saviour's second coming. The source of the error is in the closing words. Their vague sound, indistinctly understood, has misled many. Christ was referring simply to the time at His disciples' disposal, in connection with the work for which He was sending them forth. They were not to be the only workers; He Himself would not be idle. They were not to replace Him, but to multiply His presence; for the scattered multitudes and numerous villages of densely populous Galilee had not all been visited thoroughly. So we read,¹ as soon as Christ finished His charge to them, that "it came to pass when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities." By combining the accounts in Matthew and Luke, it is natural to infer that Jesus had really returned before the others. His command, then, meant only that the district was so populous, and the labourers were comparatively so few, that the preachers must not delay over towns which were manifestly hostile and stubborn, but must hurry on; for the work of salvation had to be finished as far as possible, and the greatest possible number had to be prepared to benefit when the time was come.

3. The case of Zacchæus,² is best understood by means of the spiritual ripeness of the Saviour, and the wonderful power of perception which, as I have said, He had. There is no difficulty in understanding that Christ knew this man's name by means of the bystanders. He certainly could have learned it in that way, and

¹ Matt. xi. 1.

² Matt. xix. 1.

Zacchæus could scarcely have told that He had not learned it thus, even if it had come supernaturally. So that, in such a case, there would have been no practical result of the communication. Besides, the remarkable thing in this incident is not Christ's knowledge, but His use, of the man's name. The grace of the words was their marvel. The spirit of them was touching and not merely wonderful, was moving instead of paralysing. The name enabled the man to believe he was addressed, and caused the crowd to realise it also. But though the crowd felt, it did not sympathise with, what Christ did. In fact, the motive which induced the evangelist to insert this incident in his record is nothing else than the purpose of showing how much remained still to be done, although the end was fast coming near: public opinion was not leavened yet, and had even failed to grasp, much more to sympathise with, the Saviour's spirit. The evangelist aimed at showing the crowds and the disciples to be alike inappreciative of the love which was seeking those who deserved it least yet needed it most. And Christ's tact in addressing even this man by name lent effect to His grace in calling him and winning him.

4. We read in Luke,¹ that as Christ taught in the synagogue, there was present a man with a withered hand; and the Pharisees with the scribes watched Him, whether He would heal on the sabbath day, that they might find how to accuse Him. But, it is reported, "He knew their thoughts, and said," etc. What wonder that He knew their thoughts? The wonder would have been if He had

¹ Luke vi. 7, 8.

been able to remain ignorant of them. The policy of these men had for a long time been no secret from Him. Just before this He had found clear enough evidence of their watchful bitterness. He saw what they desired to do, and what they thought to prove against Him. The place and dress of these men marked the class they were of, and their faces told the story of what He knew to be their aim. The very question by which they betrayed themselves to their critic is reported:¹ "They asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse Him." He knew what they meant by this question inside the synagogue, just as He did by their action outside it. For, as the same Gospel goes on to relate,² the Pharisees went out and took counsel against Him how they might destroy Him. "And Jesus, perceiving it, withdrew thence." To read these men was for Him no more difficult in the one case than in the other.

What happened on this occasion we can understand by what is related on another, where we read³ that a great reasoning arose among the disciples as to which of them should be greatest; and, it is said, "when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart, He took a little child." The expression, "when Jesus saw," really states the method by which the knowledge was gained; and the phrase, "reasoning of their heart," implies plainly something different from what would be expressed by "reasoning in their heart." The latter, made visible to Him by gesture, tone, accent, expression, became the former. So Christ came to know their feeling, not by

¹ Matt. xii. 10.² Matt. xii. 14.³ Luke ix. 46, 47.

intuition or hearsay, but by the testimony of His senses. The knowledge was psychological rather than supernatural.

5. Once when our Lord went by invitation to dine with a Pharisee,¹ and sat down to eat without first washing His hands, we are told that as soon as the Pharisee saw it "he marvelled that He" (Christ) "had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him," etc. In this case the Pharisee's wonder may have revealed itself in words; there is nothing to exclude that, though the language does not quite state it. Almost certainly, however, the feeling would, as in the last case, show itself in gesture or facial expression. And the quick, comprehensive mind of Christ, always so just in its view of the situation, could not fail to understand what was meant, whether He had omitted intentionally or unintentionally the process of washing.

6. On one occasion² we find that, after Pharisaic emissaries from Jerusalem, who had come to Jesus, had been answered according to their folly, by having an undisputed text of the Old Testament quoted to them, His disciples, afraid He was not fully aware of the effect He had produced, came to Him, saying, "Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" But He indicated neither surprise nor ignorance. He did not in His reply rest His knowledge on what He had seen in their faces or gestures, or on what He had heard them say, but on the application of a great general principle, which He saw covered the case. By a blend of psychological and spiritual power, He was

¹ Luke xi. 37.

² Matt. xv. 12, 13.

able to give as His reply the comment, "Every plant which My Heavenly Father planted not shall be rooted up." This knowledge was due to a combination of spiritual and intellectual powers, applying that great principle of grace, which was the counterpart to Him of man's sin, and helplessness, and need. His comment really flowed from His experience of men and their badness, and from His view that goodness could come only from God, seeing it was not naturally in any man.

7. We read ¹ that Jesus was sitting in a Pharisee's house at meat, when a woman, a sinner, came with an alabaster cruse of ointment, and, standing behind Him, wept. His feet were wet with her tears, and she wiped them with her hair; after which she kissed and anointed them. "Now," says the narrative, "when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth Him, that she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him," etc. To suppose here that Jesus had any supernatural knowledge of the state of His host's heart would destroy the simplicity and glory of the whole. Christ had felt, as He tells us in the verses following,² the lack of courtesy which His host had shown Him in not giving Him water with which to wash His feet ere He sat down to the feast as an invited guest. But He had said nothing about the matter, in His meekness never placing any personal claims or interests before those of His work. The woman, when she came in and stood behind Him, seems to have seen His unwashen, dusty,

¹ Luke vii. 39, 40.

² Ver. 44 ff.

hot feet, stretched out nearest to her, at the foot of the table, next to the door, and she was at once impressed by the extreme discourtesy of the treatment. He might bear it; she could not. At once she set herself to rectify it. Having the will, she found a way. She did what she could. Her tears began to fall, and they soon suggested the plan. The Saviour, though invited, was little noticed, so that she could safely linger and carry it out. She was finishing when the Pharisee observed her. But when he saw he can scarcely have avoided feeling some twinges of conscience over the treatment he had offered his guest. The feeling, however, cannot have been deep, or honourably faced; for at once he attempted exculpation. This woman was a sinner; what right had she to do as she had done, if this man were a prophet? Would He have permitted her to act, if He had been a prophet? He could not have known she was a sinner, or He would not have accepted such tribute from her; so He could not be a prophet. And if He were not a prophet, why should He have been treated with any respect? He had been invited as a guest, on the understanding that the popular opinion, which ranked Him as a prophet, was true. If it were not, He might have seen the misunderstanding, and ought to have refused. Now that the mistake was clear, there need be no regrets about water not having been offered.

But Jesus' skill in reading the human heart comes out by the way in which He read this sinful man, whose conscience though hampered was at work. He knew that the proud Pharisee was wincing under the rebuke implied in the woman's action. He saw that the man, to defend

himself, would shift the blame, and alter his view of his guest. He saw that the man had never got any good from Him, had no real appreciation of Him, and had no expectation of any blessing from Him. The man had expected some worldly honour, and perhaps some more than worldly help, by inviting this popular person to his house. He was glad Christ had been humbled and proved an impostor. He was glad he was not humbled himself, but was able to vindicate himself to himself. Christ "answered" him; that is, Christ met the whole spiritual situation. He gave up, not the woman, but the Pharisee. He proved Himself prophet, and more than prophet. As He stood facing them both, He made an analysis of His host's heart—perhaps unconsciously; with consummate skill He laid the half-clear hypocrisy of it bare; whilst, at the same time, He vindicated and extolled the lowly love of the penitent, believing woman.

8. We find three cases massed together,¹ which are intended to show by their connection how much our Saviour needed this blend of intellectual perception and spiritual appreciation in order to gauge and sift men. As Christ and His disciples pass, the first of three men offers himself thoughtlessly. Jesus had not called him; the man had offered himself ignorantly, therefore, as Christ saw, impulsively. He was desired by Jesus to think of the lot, the spiritually outcast lot, of those who elected to follow Him as master; and he was thereby invited to face and accept it for Christ's sake. His response, what-

¹ Luke ix. 57 ff.

ever it might be,—and it is pretty clear what it was,—became thereby at least intelligent, and symptomatic of his real condition.

To test the second man, Christ said, "Follow Me." But the answer which at once sprang forth showed by the inconsistency of its two parts what the man's state was. Christ's words had made no real impression on his heart. He had not felt them to be a command on him; Christ was not master in him. He was not willing to put the following of Christ first, for in him Christ had not the first place. He was not fit to follow, and had no right to the name of disciple.

The third man showed his unfitness even more clearly. He came making his profession and request unasked. Nay, he had seen the obligation involved, and therefore had spoken; but he wished, so far as he was concerned himself, to avoid it. And this man too, Christ condemned by the statement of a general principle: "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." For this man had offered himself, not like the first, through impulse and in ignorance, but that he might shift the responsibility for his action on Christ. He desired to be an exception to the general law which he admitted. Christ's word made that plain, and the man became his own judge.

9. In the course of His Galilean ministry, when Christ had been casting out devils,¹ we find that the Pharisees began to assert among themselves that He

¹ Luke xi. 17.

did it by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Then we read, "But He, knowing their thoughts," etc. Now, was this knowledge superhuman? I think not. The accusation was simply that He employed black magic, and had great skill in the use of it—such skill that the very prince of the devils was subject to Him. But what accusation was more likely to be made by a people who believed universally in such arts and feared them, yet in many cases tended to seek their aid and to practise them? Moreover, after all the Pharisaic devices, this was the only resource left to the enemies of Christ. They could not deny Christ's miracles, but they would not admit these to be of God. The works, therefore, must be of the devil, and similar to those of the popular, though religiously discredited, sorcerers. The explanation was weak, but it seemed possible. Above all, it had this great recommendation—it was even more capable of condemning Christ than of explaining His works. Of course the Saviour could not fail to know that this was one of the explanations most likely to occur to them, and to be alleged in the circumstances. He saw how it suited alike their purpose and their prejudice. They had no other line in which to seek an excuse to defend themselves and defeat Him; so He needed no one to tell Him of it, only half veiled, and kept from Him lest He should tear it to pieces with a word; just as He needed no one to help Him when He saw fit to speak and expose the flimsiness of its pretence.

10. Some such combination of powers as I have been already alluding to enables us to understand

better that somewhat peculiar passage¹ in which we are told that the seventy returned again rejoicing, and saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in Thy name," and He said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." The description given reminds us of that which is found in the account of the Temptation, where we read that the devil showed Christ all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in a moment of time; of that other passage, where we are told Christ, on the hilltop, saw His disciples toiling at the oars afar off in the storm; and of that passage where the Saviour declared He saw Nathanael under the fig tree ere Philip called him. The phrase seems to describe the impression made on Jesus. It tells how the thing, whatever it was itself, appeared to, and made itself known in His human mind. The actual vision of the thing was impossible, if for no other reason than that the faculties of the Saviour were truly human, and therefore really limited. The mental vision, which is described, was without doubt real, and the impression adequate, as if it had been produced by facts which were the literal counterpart of the feelings. Yet what was seen was an ideal; what was felt was real in idea and representative in fact.

The vision was in this case suggested by Christ's spiritual penetration and appreciation, and by that imaginative power which is inherent in faith as "the proving of things not seen." Christ had sent His disciples forth after expressly endowing them with the

¹ Luke x. 18.



power, whose reality had caused them such wonder. But He was not astonished at that which caused them such astonishment. He had fully expected it, had in fact been sure of the result, else He had not so plainly expressed it when He made His promise to them. His certainty as to what had taken place, His assurance in bestowing the power, came from the conviction that He Himself really had it, that He Himself had won it. He had seen Satan fall like lightning to the ground. His own first miracle, all His miracles, His own preaching of the gospel, His very right to preach the gospel, were the fruit of this. For the meaning of His work in standing fast, and specially of triumphing in the Temptation, was just the deposition of Satan as a spiritual power. His faith roused the vision, because He knew the real value of His own work and self; He had faced the tempter, fully aware of the stake; He lived in the assurance that His moral victory had its perfect value with God; His gospel was the fruit of that, and His miracles were the evidence of it which confirmed His gospel.

11. Christ's knowledge of Judas Iscariot does not necessarily contain anything supernatural. It was true that Jesus "knew from the beginning them that believed not, and who it was that should betray Him;" but the former, or general part of the statement, was only the result of such power in the Saviour as I have been speaking of—a power which we have seen Christ possessed from the beginning of His ministry;¹

¹ John ii. 25.

whilst the latter or special part of it was only the special application of that to this case by means of the guidance which the Old Testament was able to yield. It was not difficult for Jesus to see what would be the end of that apostle who did not ring true at heart.

12. A somewhat difficult case at the beginning of Christ's ministry can be explained only by the action of these same powers.¹ But these powers are here seen to be guided by a general principle. For we read that after Jesus had successfully preached in Samaria, He went forth into Galilee, "For Jesus Himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. So, when He came into Galilee, the Galileans received Him" (instead of received Him not, as we should have expected, and as He did), "having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast." It seems at first sight as if the passage were self-contradictory. But we may assume that the paradox was too plain not to have been intended, and that the author has his explanation, if only we saw it. Besides, a difficult must always have preference over an easy reading, because it is the more unlikely to have been chosen; and we are not entitled to seek any alteration of the text till a meaning is impossible.

Now, when we look into this passage, we find that what is stated is that Jesus went from Samaria to Galilee, with a principle fixed in His mind and prominently occupying His attention. He taught it by the way to His followers; for He desired that they might not be surprised when they met in His own

¹ John iv. 44, 45.

country, what He had made up His mind to expect, namely, a less favourable reception than among strangers. Doubtless He had derived the principle, just as He derived His knowledge of the betrayal, from the Old Testament. It was to Him a general truth, which applied to Himself as well as to others, the more so when He reflected on the state of the human heart and its disposition towards Himself. To Him, as yet young in His ministry, it was, however, a mere principle, the limits of whose application He had not had occasion or opportunity to explore: it was to Him a mere theory, the reality of which He had to learn in later experience, slowly and with bitterness. Here, then, He was mistaken. He was not rejected as He had expected; He was received with open arms; for the people all knew of the miracles He had been doing when in the capital at the feast, and expected more of them. These were the very miracles which had roused in the pilgrims a kind of faith, though one which Christ did not misunderstand; for He had refused to trust Himself to it. He saw the momentariness of it, the ignorance which was bedded in the heart of its excitement, and the perverted, carnal expectation out of which it arose; for "He knew what was in man." But He had not expected to find the outer surge of the same wave still turbid in Galilee. In mapping out His immediate future there, He had expected the very opposite of that which met Him. Still He was not deceived, though He was mistaken. He knew what the men at heart were, and that His principle was still true. So it is immediately added,¹ "He came *therefore* again into Cana of Galilee,

¹ John iv. 46.

where He made the water wine." In Cana He could catch up the thread of the past, and attach Himself to the last indication God had given of His presence, ere new guidance should be vouchsafed.¹

These instances which have been dealt with appear to me to be the most remarkable of those in which the knowledge Christ displays of men or things around Him seems supernatural, without being so in reality. They

¹ It may not be unsuitable to give some reason for adopting this explanation.

There are two alternatives—the first that *παρὰ* means here Judæa merely, the second that it includes Galilee also; for Jesus was born in the one district, and reared in the other.

The former implies that Jesus was taught by His experience in Jerusalem, and perhaps also in Perea, to apply to Himself the principle He here announced, and that He left Samaria expecting in Galilee a more favourable reception than had been accorded Him in the south—just such an one as, in fact, He got. But to that there are several objections. First, it does not appear as if there had been anything in the reception at Jerusalem, or in the attention bestowed on Him by the jealous Pharisees when He was in Perea, to warrant the idea that He had no honour among them. The fact holds good whether we use the word "honour" in its natural meaning, or as a synonym for spiritual success. For Nicodemus, at least, and the many baptisms in Jordan are as significant as the attention He had attracted. Second, this argument puts Galilee outside Christ's conception of His *παρὰ*; though, according to the Gospels, one is inclined to regard Him as looking on it, rather than Judæa, in that light. Third, the contrast of Judæa as *παρὰ* with Samaria and Galilee unitedly seems unnatural; and fourth, this view yields no explanation why Jesus went back to Cana.

The other alternative represents the Saviour as speaking of Judæa and Galilee unitedly under the name *παρὰ*, and makes Samaria the contrasted district. According to this view, Jesus expected the same treatment as in Jerusalem and Perea. In that He was disappointed, for the people were at least united, friendly, and demonstrative. But though the second, third, and fourth of the objections above stated are thus avoided, the first is left still unmet.

That reduces me to the conclusion that Jesus regarded Galilee as His own locality, and that He here uses of it the word *παρὰ*, though as a Jew He, of course, recognised His connection with the whole land.

supply, certainly, illustrations of the principle by which any others which exist may be also explained.

Let us now go on to consider how far, on certain occasions, the Saviour, looked at in the light of this same combination of powers, can be regarded as responsible for the effect of certain acts—for instance, for the permission which He gave the legion of devils to enter into the swine at Gadara,¹ and the permission to Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly,"² as well as the subsequent suicide of the betrayer.

In the former case we are entitled to assume, if there is no evidence to the contrary, that Christ had no idea of what would happen after the devils entered the swine. But to imagine that He was careless of the contingency, because it was in His Father's hand, or that He supposed there would be no result, or a result that was not harmful, is a view not to be for a moment entertained. He must certainly assume responsibility for the mischief that was done, even if He did not know beforehand the shape that it, as the outcome of His own action, would take. He could not fail to feel that it would be placed on Him, as indeed it was, by the men of the district, when they "besought Him to depart out of their coasts."

We have, then, to face the question of the authority which enabled Christ to act in the matter as He did, when He granted the request of the demons. He is not freed by mere ignorance of the exact effect produced by the entry of the evil spirits into the swine. It seems that Christ's motive—by which He stands free—was His intention of completing on these hardened natives

¹ Mark v. 13.

² John xiii. 27.

the effect of His miracle. The double miracle on the demon-possessed man and on these swine was intended to make known to the degraded people of the eastern coast of the lake their own value in God's eyes as human beings. He who taught that a man is better than a sheep, and made the worth of men the foundation of His gospel, desired to let them see that God did not agree with them in preferring beasts to men, or riches to love. He desired them to see that He had not felt to their townsman as they had, who manacled him, and let him live in tombs; not because the man was fierce and dangerous, but because they did not love him. They did not feel thankful the sufferer was restored, but rather grumbled that they had lost their swine. So this calamity was sent by God—allowed in God's providence—to bring home to these men, in the only way they could feel, the view He had of man's worth, and the degradation of their own hearts, evidenced by the absence of even that good feeling which ought to have been natural to them as men.

Apart from this, it would be hardly right to lay the responsibility on Christ's Divine right, for Christ acted here not omnisciently and as God, but within human limitations and as Saviour. He either desired, that is, prayed for this particular effect as in his view suitable, or prayed for and expected such an effect as would help His purpose. The thing was God's doing, but it was certainly according to Christ's will, and done to serve His aim. The highest interests of the kingdom warranted the occurrence, but the responsibility is shared and accepted by Him who gave the providential power for

such a result upon the swine, and not borne only by Him who permitted the demons to enter them. God followed up the words of Christ, vindicating the motive as well as the right of His Son when He completed the effect His Son desired.

The second case—the case of Judas—presents less difficulty, but is far from easy to make clear. The words, “That thou doest, do quickly,” are not a command in regard to a thing, but as to its method: they indicate not only knowledge of the thing to come, but also that the heart of the person about to do it is beyond hope of recall. Of course these words led on really to the suicide, because they led up first of all to the act of betrayal. They let the betrayer see he was known, and made him hasten to carry out his aim. When he saw Christ had yielded Himself up willingly, the remembrance of these words forced on him the conclusion, “I have betrayed the innocent blood.” Still, though they led to the knowledge and sting of guilt, they did not lead to the guilt itself. Now the former is God’s, the latter man’s. Christ roused the former in God’s name, but He did it only because—He could not have done it unless—the man had already assumed the guilt. Naturally enough, Christ saw the man’s guilt. He could infer the coming misery. But, even from such a passage as, “The Son of Man goeth, even as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed!”¹ there is no evidence that Christ had any further knowledge in the matter.

It is in view, then, of all we have seen concerning

¹ Matt. xxvi. 24.

Christ's knowledge of the spiritual aspects of men and things, that we must interpret the statement which the ignorant disciples made:¹ "Now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now know we that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee" (to tell what he desires in his heart to know): "by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." In this passage we have, doubtless, an instance of the wish being father of the thought. The disciples argued to Christ's omniscience from His Messianic calling and His Divine mission, about which He had spoken. They thought not only that the Messiahship necessitated the Divine mission, but that they found proof of the Messiahship by being able to see in Christ, as a sign of Divinity, some supernatural knowledge. They shared the popular idea seen in Nathanael and Simon the Pharisee. The former was struck by what he thought the supernaturalness of Christ's knowledge; and the latter thought omniscience a feature necessary to Christ, but lacking in Him, for the authentication of His mission. Of course Nathanael erred in his estimate, as Christ showed at the time. The Pharisee erred by mingling his fancy about the knowledge he thought a prophet should possess with his prejudice as to the contempt and separateness he imagined a holy person ought to feel, and even show for a sinner. In his case too we see what value Christ attached to the idea. Omniscience did not mean to the Saviour what it meant to men. It was like the supreme glory of heaven; not a thing to be snatched at, but legitimately won; not an object of ambition, but a means

¹ John xvi. 30.

of blessing and service. He had laid it aside to take up His humanity, enclosing Himself in the blank walls of a slowly widening human nature, which permitted at the best but a glimpse of heaven's blue above. One does not wonder, then, that those who crucified Him for the blasphemy of claiming to be the Son of the living God thought they had found in the absence of supernatural knowledge, or, as they understood it, omniscience, on His part, a proof of the falsity of His claim. When they mocked Him, one of the ways they adopted was: "They blindfolded Him, and asked Him, saying, Prophecy, who is he that struck Thee?"¹ They could not imagine such helplessness, or that, coming to save others, Himself He could not save. Yet it was as impossible for Him to tell their names, as to make bread for Himself when hungry during the Temptation, or to come down from the Cross and deliver Himself by legions of angels.

The disciples seem to have been rather confused on the subject. In their inmost hearts they doubtless desired Him to be omniscient, and identified that with the occasional gleams of supernatural information which He showed. But in ordinary life, when they acted unreflectingly, they seem to have been under the impression that He saw and knew just as they did themselves. That we see from the way in which they speak on the occasion when the woman afflicted with an issue of blood was healed. Jesus declared that someone had touched Him. They seem to have been irritated at what appeared to them the folly of His words. The

¹ Luke xxii. 64.

people were thronging and pressing, so that either He was ignorant of that, which was unlikely, or He could not be expected to know who the persons were. When Jesus was going to raise Lazarus, Martha said,¹ "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he has been dead four days;" whilst, in response to His question, "Where have ye laid him?" the crowd had answered quite naturally, "Come and see."² John the Baptist's disciples treated the Saviour in the same way, for, after their master's execution, "they came and told Jesus." And when the elders of the Jews came to our Lord beseeching Him to heal the centurion's servant, they added the explanation,³—though Jesus lived in the same town,— "He is worthy that Thou shouldest do this for him: for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue." The facts regarding the Saviour were, it is evident, not yet fully enough before His disciples for them to be able to form an accurate theory of His knowledge. They inclined to one extreme or another according to the mood, but could not see how to account for all the facts. Thus, to show their error in judging Him by this standard, He had to deal with the matter indirectly, as in the case of Nathanael and Simon the Pharisee; not by saying they were right or wrong in their theory, but by showing them what a poor thing after all omniscience in Him would be, as a ground for their faith. With a direct touch of loving irony He asked, "Do ye now believe?"⁴ and then added, as comment on the query, "The hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." This

¹ John xi. 39.² John xi. 34.³ Luke vii. 5.⁴ John xvi. 31.

was all that omniscience in Him could have done—foreseen their failure, not prevent it. That was all the worth of faith if it rested on His omniscience; it would fail on the first trial.

We have come, then, to see, in the course of our investigation, that omniscience was a thing to which Christ attached no value in the matter of salvation. In fact, He looked on it not only as unnecessary, but even as hurtful and crippling. For His purpose the knowledge He had was far superior. It was for Him flexible, apt, natural, easily adapted to, and not needing to be revealed for, special occasions. Yet it was absolutely reliable. It enabled Him, with the certitude born of experience, to testify to men; and because of its certitude and of its grace, it became a perfect ground of faith.

Of course there remains the difficulty that, though Christ had this combination of powers from the beginning of His public ministry, it was not a preventative against error. That, however, did not imply any mistake on His part as to spiritual things or their issues.

CHAPTER IV

CHRIST'S DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

WE have come to the conclusion that, whilst Jesus had, on a few special occasions, such a knowledge of men and things as cannot have been less than supernatural, the most of what He knew was acquired within the limits, and simply by means of, His human faculties. However, we have still to inquire whether any part of His knowledge was of a more special character; whether it was Divine rather than merely superhuman; whether it came by His being God, rather than from the Godhead.

Already we have seen a hint of something like that in His conversation with Nathanael. There, in bringing out the imperfection of mere supernatural knowledge as a foundation for faith, and pointing forward to some better thing, He said,¹ "Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Now, undoubtedly, the knowledge He referred to in these words was that of Himself and His work as Saviour.

He made this, however, clear in His interview with Nicodemus.² There He distinguished between τὰ

¹ John i. 51.

² John iii. 12.

ἐπουράνια and *τὰ ἐπίγεια*. The "epigeia" refer clearly to earthly things in their spiritual aspects. They are the needs of the human soul, as these might be known to itself. Christ indicates His view of them when He says to Nicodemus, "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know and bear witness of that we have seen. . . . If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?"¹ When we inquire as to the "epourania," or heavenly things, we find that the Saviour did not refer to "things which it is not lawful to utter." They were not mystic things, which could not with any adequacy be expressed in human language. They were not considered by Christ to be unfit for human consideration, or unprofitable to ordinary men. Rather, they seem, like the mysteries of the kingdom, to have been things which men unaided never could have reached, but which, if revealed, they were quite able to appreciate. Christ looked on them as things belonging to another sphere of life, to another order of affairs, one totally different from that in which man lives, or of which he has any idea. In His view they belonged to the heavenly world. In fact, they marked and embodied the life belonging to it—a life as different from ours as heaven itself from earth, and as exalted. Strauss puts the distinction with essential correctness when he says epigeia are communications connected with the new birth, epourania the more difficult things of heaven, especially the announcement of the Messiah's destination to a vicarious death.

¹ John iii. 11, 12.

The epourania, Christ thought, are so different from our ordinary ideas, and so characteristic of the place of their origin, that no mere man is able to rise to them. They need to be brought down; they can be brought down only by one who has had experience of them, belonging to their sphere and possessing its life. A mere man is only of the earth; he savours the things which are of men. His views, aims, tastes, and conduct, are just those of the mass. The whole is of a piece. As John the Baptist witnessed of himself,¹ a mere man even a prophet, can give only what he has received, can give truth that is at the best but fragmentary truth not in its position among other truths. But if he who is of the earth is earthy, and speaks of the earth after its fashions and standards, then He who comes from above is above all—above all He left, perhaps; above all He came to, certainly. He who belongs to heaven knows the things of heaven; they are innate; therefore, when He comes from heaven, He can bear witness accurately to what He has seen and heard.


Now, Christ believed Himself to stand alone among men as the means of communicating this knowledge. Men might attain to and teach "earthly things," but "no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven—the Son of Man which is in heaven."² Men can obtain a knowledge of the life of heaven only through One who has been, who is, there; who has its life throbbing in His veins, and its ideas and sympathies

¹ John iii. 27, 31.

² John iii. 13. The last clause of this verse not being so well supported by MS. evidence, it may be well to point out that the argument does not rest on or even need to use it.

dominant within Him. Only One, said Jesus, was thus qualified.

Consequently, according to Christ, His own qualification for treating of "heavenly" affairs was His Divine personality. His mission was to give the life by which they were known. No mere man could ever have reached the ideas this life embodied, that it was founded on and guided by. But because He was what He was, He began with it, and possessed its ideas and tastes. Not even an angel could have spoken of it as He did, in whom it was eternally existent. An angel's province was the occasional communication of merely supernatural information. Now the *epourania* meant far more than the mention of any single or isolated fact, however great. These heavenly things were a whole system of thought and feeling, of aim and method, in short, of life which could be brought by none but Him who had it in Himself, in whom it stirred as His own life. The earthly things might be taught by the Holy Spirit apart from all else; but the heavenly things which Christ taught were original in His own person and on His own lips. He never regarded His knowledge of them as an incidental flash, whose occasion passed, leaving the darkness only more intense. Such knowledge, merely supernatural, could come to any man. Peter received it as really as his Lord. But Jesus believed His knowledge of heavenly things was primary and not imparted. It was neither gained by experience nor given to opportunity; even though experience may have cleared or expanded it, and opportunity may have opened up the way to its fully defined consciousness. It implied no



miracle of mere power, but one of grace, as He had already hinted. It was not a scrap of superhuman information, but in essence and principles the very mind, the complete mind of God Himself.

The things which Christ included in the epourania become clear during the course of the conversation with Nicodemus. Taken as a whole they reveal the peculiarity of God's will, which may be said to be characteristic of Him. Three things are specially mentioned; and these, all lying in one line, and marking it, in fact, at different points,—beginning, middle, and end,—may be taken as expressing its three leading positions. They represent the mind of Heaven (1) according as that is embodied in Christ; (2) as it can be traced back to the Father; and (3) as it points on to judgment. Christ does not, in speaking to Nicodemus, say that these exhaust the subject; they seem in the circumstances to be rather a representative selection, chosen to impress the hearer, and enable him to feel the spirit out of which they spring. For only by appreciation as a whole can they be learned, and not by piecemeal recognition; they express a spirit, a nature, a type, and are real only as it is—are all real if it is. In the first of the three positions Christ states that the object of His presence upon earth was to give men eternal life; inasmuch as that could come to them only by faith in the Son of Man, and Him uplifted. Being “uplifted” must have appeared to Him a necessary part of His lot. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”¹ The second position is that in

¹ John iii. 14.

which the Saviour follows this up to its origin. He traces it to God and to God's love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" to carry out this purpose.¹ The third position touches, as the first had virtually done, on the epigeia; for the fact of responsibility, or coming judgment, stands between the epigeia and the epourania, with a face to each. The knowledge of it as mere judgment is part of man's natural moral equipment, or, at least, may be reached by him without help; whilst, on the other hand, the knowledge of it as carried out by means of the Saviour, or because of His work, depends on revelation.

As we see at once, then, these three great lines of thought are not all equally fundamental. Of the three, the first is evidently the most important. It is the centre on which the two others depend. Though it implies and founds on, it is also the sign and proof of the second—God's purpose of love; whilst it is the cause and means of the third—the necessity of judgment. When Christ recognised it, the other two became also of necessity clear. But previous to this, He needed to be sure both that God was the God of love (in a general sense, yet the fullest possible), and that He Himself was Divine. He needed to know both Himself and the Father perfectly, ere He could be certain about the meaning of His position here, the Father's object, and the future of the world. Now the former—the knowledge of God as the God of love—is generally admitted to have been one of the earliest convictions and the controlling power of even Christ's boyhood.

¹ John iii. 16.

How He arrived at it, and how He became conscious of His own divinity, we shall have to examine later on. Just now it is enough to remark that the epourania do not seem to have been all equally fundamental or original in Christ. At least there is no reason, rather the reverse, for thinking so. Yet, for the most fundamental of them, there is implied on Christ's part both a conviction about God's nature and a consciousness of His own. For though the knowledge of them could be brought and given only by Him who was Divine, even He was able to communicate it, as well as to gain the end of His own life, only by knowing Himself to be Divine. That is the necessary condition by which His vision of God as the God of love was enlarged, and yet defined till His Father stood revealed as the God of grace. The contents of the epourania could open out, not to One who had the nature of God, but to One who had the knowledge that He had that nature.

Let me emphasise, then, this primary position : that the knowledge of these things was possible to Christ, not only because He was God, but after He knew that He was God. He Himself always bases His claim to teach on His fitness to teach. His qualification is His right. He makes everything depend on that ; and everything must indeed depend on it. His self-recognition is fundamental ; on that depends the worth of His life and teaching. If we cannot be satisfied as to it, the whole superstructure of the epourania, constituting His revelation of God as He believed Him to be, falls to the ground ; in that event He was deceived as to Himself, and had no revelation of God to give us ; His theory

was only a pious hope. Whilst, upon the other hand, if He knew His place by self-recognition, then we can understand how thereafter He could perform its duties. We infer, as seems but natural in any case, that His conception of His person preceded and even determined His belief in His mission. He did not become aware of His mission in some indirect manner, as late, say, as His baptism; and so He did not some time thereafter have forced on Him, as the effect of His mission, the idea of a Divine Sonship more or less real. He knew His calling because He recognised Himself and felt the irresistible stirring and the imperative claims of His own nature.

The knowledge of His own Godhead came early, and the way in which its obligations appeared to Him are seen sufficiently in His own words on one or two occasions.

It seems undeniable that our Saviour at twelve years old spoke of God as His Father in a very special sense. The words of His mother, "Thy father and I," indicate the habit of the household; she had hitherto called Joseph the father of Jesus. As Christ's words about His Heavenly Father are of course to be interpreted by contrast with hers, we can see that the instinct of the lad expressed a self-recognition, which she had not led up to. With the very first words which He utters to John the Baptist, "Suffer it now,"¹ He virtually accepts from the religious leader of the time, the baptizer unto repentance, the words he had just uttered, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and

¹ Matt. iii. 15.

comest Thou to me?" whilst the conversation with Nicodemus not only implies His self-recognition, but depends on it.

But the impression He had of the obligations entailed by this also comes out with sufficient clearness. The first part of the statement, "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father,"¹ might be considered by some to be a mere inference of faith from principles of general righteousness; but the words which form the latter part involve, without doubt, the highest claim. Even if the statement, that "no man knoweth the Father save the Son," be understood in no other than a merely moral sense, yet what can anyone say to the still more wonderful assertion, that "no one knoweth the Son save the Father"? And even as to the Son's knowledge of the Father, it may be called moral, if that seem right; but it was a knowledge not acquired, and so not controlled by any obligation except itself. For what can one see but the absolute right of inherent lordliness in the expression *ὅτι ἐὰν βούληται*, as expressive of the condition by which the knowledge was held? He would be utterly unchristian in spirit who, having as mere man this knowledge by birth, personal attainment, or revelation, stated deliberately that he was under no obligation to communicate it save to whom he willed, or if he willed. It is impossible to look on the Christ in a light so unchristian. If we admit His words,—and they are most generally admitted to be part of the Gospels,—we can only hold that they express His belief that He had His knowledge by virtue of His own Divine

¹ Matt. xi. 27.

nature. Of course it may be said that immediately after these words He does begin to call men to Himself: "Come unto Me all ye that labour." But whilst that invitation proclaims the grace of His heart, and the graciousness of what He held to be the Father's purpose, it comes from the uncontrolled goodness of His own will; it is grace, and has power, because it comes from the lips of One who could use the words which had just preceded.

This fact is again brought out when Jesus argues with the Jews as to His being their Messiah. When He does so, and at a most critical time,—for the plain statement of the truth meant death,—He does not rest His Messianic claim on His being the Son of David, but on His being the Son of God. The Jews would have believed along the one line of proof; He believed, nay, had arrived at His conviction, by the other. And it He looked on as alone right. They remarked that the Messiah was to be David's Son; He pointed out that in the 110th Psalm David himself had called the Messiah, his son, Lord. And "if David then calleth Him Lord, how is He his son?"¹ Now here the evidence is not invalidated, whatever Christ meant by His reference to the authorship; He puts the argument as one whose condition they accepted, and He did not dispute; so that its inference also was incumbent upon them. He does not say that He had attained, by means of this passage, His own knowledge of the fact about which He is speaking. He only indicates that they, in their present state of belief, are bound to accept it from this source.

¹ Matt. xxii. 45.

Hence it seems clear that for Christ Himself the consciousness of His person came first, the perception of His calling second. That by which He was sure of His Messianic vocation was not His Davidic descent (for there might have been many who could have claimed that qualification equally at least with Him) but his Divine Sonship.

Perhaps it is right now to call attention to the fact that the introduction of such a line of thought into the conversation with Nicodemus does not seem, when one comes to think over it, out of place. The subject is not obtruded artificially, nor is it used as a means of humiliating one who was a teacher of Israel. Here, as ever, it is introduced for a practical and appropriate object, the one object which warranted it, viz. God's purpose of grace in saving men. The very mention of the *epourania* is incidental in the account to that of the *epigeia*. The knowledge Christ had of His own person is referred to in order to explain the knowledge He claimed in regard to this subject, which he was expounding.

For the purposes of my argument I do not need to assume the genuineness of any verses after the sixteenth, or even of the sixteenth, seeing its truth is at least implied in the preceding ones. It is unnecessary for the present purpose to decide between those who, like Lücke, think the latter verses consist of John's and Christ's ideas intermingled, and those who, with Strauss, consider the whole to be a single piece, due either to Christ or to the author of the Fourth Gospel.

I have rather to point out that it was not unnatural



for Jesus in His early ministry to have spoken, any more than to have become aware, of such a subject. This knowledge constituted His call and object. He had nothing else to preach or to carry out. It was alike His message and His mission. And if He had it, why not speak it, especially to an honest, earnest inquirer, whose ripeness of spirit and trained intelligence were far ahead of his actual attainments? Jesus might well infer that He was not likely to see this "teacher of Israel" soon again; He could easily perceive that in such a man the leaven would ferment till it had leavened the whole lump. He could not shut His eyes to the fact that it was of the very greatest importance for Him to gain such a follower in the Council, and for the man himself to be at some possible crisis possessed of full and clear information about the main points of his Saviour's mission. The outcome justified Christ's judgment and action in the matter.

Nay, such a case does not stand alone. Almost as early Christ spake with equal plainness, if not with equal completeness, to the woman of Samaria, though her intellectual training was quite different; afterwards also, in like manner, to the man born blind in Jerusalem, though he was wholly uneducated. To the one He said,¹ "I that speak unto thee am He"; to the other, adapting His way of putting the truth, as in the former case, to what was characteristic in the circumstances, and to what must have struck the person,² "Thou hast both seen Him, and He it is that speaketh with thee." He had just declined to have anything to

¹ John iv. 26.

² John ix. 37.

do with the crowds in Jerusalem; but, as the result of that fully warranted it ever afterward, in Judæa and Galilee alike, so His speaking as He did to these three persons, in two cases at least as early as that refusal, is vindicated by its effects.

Does it not seem very far fetched, then, to adopt the old Socinian explanations of such texts as "Before Abraham was, I am,"¹ or "Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was,"² and to say that they represent the predestination of Christ? To say of the latter verse, that it is the result of spiritual imagination in a moment of special exaltation, is dangerously like saying that the whole is the result of mere imagination. How can anyone avoid seeing that it is merely to strain language into unmeaning emptiness if one say that the Saviour called Himself the only begotten Son simply in order to bring out the greatness of the sacrifice God made in sending Him? It involves sacrifice of the truth, if there were other such sons; it involves sacrifice of Christ's veracity, if He did not know there were none such besides Himself. The sacrifice demanded is greater than could be compensated for by any other. We should lose Christ much more surely the one way than the other. The Saviour could not have known Himself as the only begotten Son by mere separateness from other children of God whom He met; that was a conclusion far beyond the premises. He could have known it, as we shall see, and could have been warranted in teaching it, only by the knowledge of His own Godhead. How

¹ John viii. 58.

² John xvii. 5.

absurd, then, to accept even so strained an interpretation, when the admission has to be made that, "it is not to be doubted that Jesus, by some admissions which point in that direction" (personal pre-existence), "gave him" (the author of the Fourth Gospel), "ground for that view"! Such reasonings, I confess, seem to me to verge on the disingenuous, and simply make clear the extreme difficulty of getting rid of such inconveniently plain texts. There is no resting-place logically between considering Jesus the vainest of men and regarding Him as the very Son of God.

What strikes one in this connection is that Christ never introduced His Godhead except in a natural way, with a practical object. But for the needs of His mission, we should never have heard of it. He did not make the claim and say no more, leaving us in real ignorance and to mere wonder. He did not even content Himself by adding proof. He only mentioned the fact in connection with the aim of His grace. Specially He used it as the foundation of the *epourania*, as the explanation of His presence and the vindication of His mission.

He never gave a merely abstract statement of it. He never flaunted it; though one feels it lay in the background of His mind as the pre-supposition of His thinking and the warrant of His aims. He never tried to press for faith in it; He knew how great the thing was, and how difficult to face. He knew that to gain faith in it was to get conviction of it, and that that was a result worth waiting for. His heart was not attracted by what it might bring of *eclat*. He rejoiced in what He was,

but only because by it He could bless men supremely. He seems to have been afraid of even the appearance of boasting or self-seeking in connection with it. If, as we have seen, this knowledge of heavenly things was one which was under no obligation or law but its own, then the law ruling it in Him was that of grace which ruled in the God whom He professed to reveal; for no sooner has He made the great claim of mutual knowledge between Himself and the Father alone, followed by the almost greater claim of absoluteness in controlling His communication of it, than at once He cries, as if impressed by the obligation to be practical, "Come unto Me all ye that labour; I will give you rest."¹ No one is to be left free to imagine any selfishness, unwillingness, or partiality in Him. There was no vanity in His claim. He was not self-deceived any more than a deceiver. He was the Son of God, come from heaven, and by knowing that He knew Himself to be fitted for teaching the epourania.

Accordingly we find that Christ never allowed Himself to be looked upon as standing in the ordinary line of spiritual teachers. He recognised the continuity of religious work in the successive ages; He declared that one sowed, and another reaped. Yet He looked on Himself as special and separate in this matter. He had not learned like others. He was different Himself, and so therefore was His knowledge. All others were but sent; He Himself was the sender. "*I sent you,*" He says, "to reap that whereon ye have not laboured: others have laboured, and ye are entered

¹ Matt. xi. 28.

into their labour.”¹ This was the testimony and view of John the Baptist. He looked on himself as the friend of the Bridegroom, who standeth and *heareth*.² And that testimony was expressly accepted by the Saviour when He said,³ “Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come; and when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then will they fast in those days.” What could represent more emphatically the solitariness of Christ even when surrounded by those who were most sympathetic and appreciative? As He conceived, His position and work gave importance to His presence and made it an occasion; men could only rejoice in it. He looked on Himself as giving to His age its distinctive mark of privilege. He looked on His presence as making all the difference between past and present. “Verily I say unto you,” are His words,⁴ “That many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.” He not merely modified the past; that every successive worker had done by the addition he made to the sum. He made a real advance, a new beginning. John the Baptist summed up an older era; He inaugurated the new one. The law and the prophets were till John; since John there had been introduced a new and unrestricted salvation, men entering the kingdom by force; there had come greater privilege than ever before, for greater than John,

¹ John iv. 37, 38.² Luke v. 34-36.³ John iii. 29.⁴ Matt. xiii. 17.

the greatest born of woman, is he that is but little in the kingdom of God. The new method was not the foolish one of putting a new piece on an old garment, or new wine into old skins. The new era brought its own new ways. It brought what was new in spirit, and needed new forms of its own.

The emphasis Christ laid on His divinity was occasioned by the explanation and vindication it afforded of His position and work. He accounted for His presence by His mission, but recognised His mission by His person. The sympathies, tendencies, and ideas of His nature were not those of others; they were, like Himself, from above. To Him they represented the Father's will. It was right and natural for Him to live by them. He bore witness to the truth¹—the *epourania* as well as the *epigeia*; and He regarded His word on both as final.

There is a kind of knowledge possessed by Christ whose contents at first sight we are apt to confuse with the *epourania*. For instance, it comes out when Christ says,² "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." Here we find, not only that Christ considered it impossible there could be any divergence on His part as Son from the Father's line of action, but that this was secured and carried out, so far as His human nature was concerned, by a revelation (as

¹ John xviii. 37.

² John v. 19.



He recognised) continuously given from the Father. In that the Son received new and peculiar knowledge of the Father's working. From the connection of the argument, however, in regard to the use of the Sabbath, it appears that the revelation referred to was that disclosed in general providence. There the Saviour saw the same grace and self-denial which He felt stirring in His own heart. And it became confirmatory, in its own sphere, of the message which lay deep in the heart of the epourania—God loved, and the Son of Man must be lifted up.

But, as we see, this knowledge, though confirmatory of that other, came later. The earlier was native to His own person, the other was gradually communicated; for it came to Him from without, as a revelation. The latter only supplemented the former. It was by the higher of these that Christ could say, "The Son *can* do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing." The Divine assurance that He could not be false to sonship was only *confirmed* by the discovery that the aims and methods of His working were ever those which He found His Father following.

This latter was, I have no doubt, the usual assurance by which the Father guided and confirmed His Son—a moral assurance. By it the Saviour became sure of the great principles of action which were to pierce life and open out the future to Him. As we have already seen, He received also on special occasions a supernatural knowledge of certain facts, which was needful to supplement the knowledge these principles

supplied; but of course that did not imply on His part any doubt regarding them.

I think we begin now to see that what was remarkable in Christ was not omniscience, or the extent of His knowledge. Christ was not a human encyclopædia, or a scholarly compendium of facts. His knowledge was limited. The remarkable thing in Him was the strain of grace, which was natural in His person, and was regulative for Him of the main line in life. The worth of His life depended, not on a miraculous knowledge constantly of what was right, but on the perfectly balanced power of doing what was right in any circumstances in which He found Himself, of acting with the same motives and perfectness as if in heaven still, of applying the same principles unerringly to the new circumstances in which He found Himself—limited though He was in human body and soul.

I think it must be clear, too, that the Saviour's Divine knowledge influenced Him in the gaining of all other knowledge. In the passage already quoted from the fifth chapter of John, we see how the innate consciousness of divinity, and what it implied, received confirmation from sources outside Himself. But as the epourania involved, besides a certain range of thoughts, a corresponding type of feelings and desires, of sympathies and aims, all alike expressive of Divine life, one cannot imagine any knowledge to have been acquired by Him without being thus shaped and coloured, or without needing to adapt itself to these. For these showed things to Him in their own light. They were the

presuppositions without which He could not think, and apart from which He could not act. Things were repellent or attractive according to these. The judgment in Him of right and wrong, the ideas of life and duty, were the outcome of these feelings and conceptions.

Here we have the secret of His holiness. The epourania became the standard of His conscience. They upheld aversion to sin and glad acceptance of all that served their own end. By the conscientious loyalty He maintained towards them came His wonderful experience and its worth. By this too came the perfectness of His acquired knowledge of moral principle, and His unfailing, unerring application of it, the harmony of epourania and epigeia, of human and Divine in Him, His perfect life and death.

CHAPTER V

CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

THERE is reason to believe, then, that Christ had a knowledge which was Divine, a knowledge belonging to Him by virtue of His connection with heaven. It was the endowment of His life and the equipment for His mission. It was His from first to last, and formed the regulative power under whose conditions He acquired human knowledge, as well as the guide by whose aid He led His life.

We have seen that it did not imply omniscience; its original amount was a very minimum of knowledge, perhaps not more than of Himself as Divine, though that was accompanied by a complete set of harmonious tastes and sympathies.

But we must remember that His possession of this influenced all His other knowledge and His judgments. He believed that in the way men saw things they owed much to their nature. The view, not the thing, differed according to the person who looked. He said, "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father. . . . If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. . . . Ye are of your father

the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do."¹

This caused Christ to feel His nature was His trust, and to recognise the epourania as His guide. To treat all by their light was for Christ all duty. He said, "I can of Myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is righteous; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."² To be true to His nature was to be true to God; it was the guarantee to Himself of the correctness of His own action. By observing this method He kept the Father's favour, and gained the object for which the Father had sent Him into the world; as is evident when He tells us,³ "He that sent Me is with Me: He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him."

And thus, too, came increase of knowledge. Adherence to the supremacy of the epourania was not only the test of correct knowledge and action, but the means by which the Father imparted a further revelation of fact in the experience of daily life. To Him that had was given. The revelation was, of course, a revelation because He had eyes to see it. The eyes of all others were blind, for their hearts were impure. Their thoughts of God were wrong, and their feelings regarding Him blunted or even perverted; but this pure heart had anointed eyes, for this was an anointed person, one so sympathetic that the Spirit could be given to Him without measure.⁴ The complete knowledge of the epourania, and, coloured by

¹ John viii. 38, 39, 44.

² John v. 30.

³ John viii. 29.

⁴ John iii. 34.

it, the whole knowledge of the epigeia, came as the result of this loyalty, or of the abiding supremacy which they held in Him. Now that was due to His Holy Spirit. He saw this revelation with an internal eye, as John indicates by the use of the word *βλέπη*.

Of course, in speaking of this revelation¹—this added knowledge, which came to His faithfulness—He could speak, and required to speak to the Jews merely of the Father, who was its source. To have spoken of the Holy Spirit, by means of whom it was communicated, would have been folly in the circumstances; so that in reading such passages as ² “When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father taught Me, I speak these things” (where the things are evidently epourania); or,³ “The things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto the world;” or,⁴ “The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but . . . all things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you,” we must see the action of the Holy Spirit, and refer what is mentioned, not to the original endowment of epourania, but to the acquired store which the Spirit taught from the revelation supplied by the Father.

There should be, therefore, no difficulty in allowing a real growth on Christ's part in the knowledge of detail, both of the methods and facts of the epourania, and of course in the development and enlightenment of its associated sympathies correspondingly. That

¹ John v. 19.

² John viii. 26.

³ John viii. 28.

⁴ John xv. 15, viii. 38-40.

is, in point of fact, what explains the utterance of the twelve years' old child. For to be sure of His nature and calling was not, of course, to see its difficulties or to be qualified to meet them. Luke,¹ indeed, represents the Saviour as a boy of remarkable mental power, able beyond others and able beyond His years to grasp the relations in which facts stood to one another (*σύνεσις*). But that, of course, does not imply complete development of intellect or stagnancy of mental growth thereafter. For even if *πληρούμενον σοφία*² does not mean "becoming full of wisdom," but "being filled with wisdom" (*i.e.* spiritual insight), the phrase must be understood in connection with the evangelist's later statement that the child advanced in wisdom³ (*προέκοπτεν τῇ σοφίᾳ*). The statement of mental capacity and of spiritual ripeness must be explained by the same principle. What the intellect came to be is seen in the questions Jesus put to others. What the spiritual insight came to be we find set forth by Christ Himself, in a passage also contained in Luke,⁴ where the Saviour compares Himself with Solomon, and speaks of Himself as greater than that king in the very characteristic for which the monarch was remarkable. When the Saviour came forth in the prime of manhood, His Father gave Him sure testimony that He had made no mistake in regard either to the fact of His calling or His fitness for it. God put His seal on His servant, and destined Him consciously to success. Certainly, from the moment of His baptism, Christ's knowledge of the epourania was perfectly clear and definite. His assurance of their reality was such that He had no hesitation in staking all on

¹ Luke ii. 47.² Luke ii. 40.³ Luke ii. 52.⁴ Luke xi. 31.

them. Their detail, so far as He knew it, He revealed, of course, only as He found fitting. Though much of the detail of their working out continued to be revealed to Himself piecemeal, at such times and by such ways as the Father saw fit, the essentials were, from the first, quite clear and sure.

Let us now turn to that other department of His knowledge which the Saviour called the epigeia. In it He included all that pertained to spiritual life, but was not contained in the epourania. In the third chapter of John He does not represent its contents as naturally inaccessible to men, or beyond the reach of their present powers; if these things are hid, they are hidden because of the prejudices of sin. So we are fairly entitled to infer that Christ reached the epigeia in the ordinary way, but, of course, under the influence of all that was contained for Him in the epourania — whether knowledge or sympathies. We may safely infer that He gained His knowledge of the spiritual condition and needs of men, humbly, painfully, gradually. With whatever knowledge endowed, it must have been for Him as man a new and ever new experience to realise that, according to its particulars. He learned what it meant as He lived among men and saw its working daily; just, as though He came with the Cross in His heart, He learned what it involved only as He went on, as He came near to it and faced it.

It becomes clear, then, that in the matter of epigeia as of epourania, Christ first lived that which He taught. He entered on knowledge by action and experience. He felt His way into full light, sifting, testing, grasping,

grouping, under loyalty to the Divine endowment and by the Holy Spirit. That was what enabled Him to speak with authority and not as the scribes, to oppose His solitary dictum to the received and unquestioned opinions of antiquity. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you."¹ His authority in spiritual matters rested, in fact, not on His being God, but on the ripe experience He had as perfect man, ever filled with the Spirit. It rested on a power which was acquired by accepting anything needed in carrying out and fulfilling, as was fit, all righteousness. Christ was Himself the model scribe of the kingdom, who brought out of His treasures "things new and old."²

Christ sets forth by no means dimly His own obligation to the Holy Spirit throughout all this process; although, as we have seen, He was not able, owing to the condition of His hearers, to make reference to it on all occasions where it would have been natural. And His testimony is amply upheld by the confirmatory statements of the evangelists. For example, after the Temptation we find³ that "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and a fame went out concerning Him through all the region round about. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." In the same chapter⁴ we find that Jesus expressly chose and applied to Himself, in connection with the work of His Messianic calling, the prophetic passage where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor . . . to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

¹ Matt. v. 21.² Matt. xiii. 52.³ Luke iv. 14.⁴ Luke iv. 18.

Let us now examine the sources of Christ's knowledge of the epigeia. We saw that the Father so used his Holy Spirit in the world in which His Son was placed, and the providence exercised toward Him, as to turn these into sources of information. The knowledge, it is true, was about God. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," said Christ. But it was, after all, only confirmatory of the epourania. I have no doubt, however, that the epourania suggested other thoughts, and so became a source of similar importance for epigeia. Still the Saviour's own perfect ideas of good and evil, and the supremacy of His own conscience, were the main origins of them, and formed the possession which the Spirit could enrich by a varied and extensive experience. It is absurd to say, like Baur, that Christ owed all His spiritual knowledge to His perfect moral nature. That were to ignore His divinity, and the influence of the epourania. Yet the great importance of it cannot be overlooked. Aided by other sources it became a perfect guide. One of these, the Old Testament, is so prominent that the consideration of it must be reserved for treatment in a following chapter.

Our Saviour on certain occasions shows Himself in the very process of deducing epigeia from epourania. Take, for instance, His assurance as to the safety of His people. See how He puts the matter. He says,¹ "No one shall snatch them out of My hand." That was His conviction; but the reason for it, expressly added, is, "My Father, which hath given them unto Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."

¹ John x. 28, 29.

In like manner, we see, from the assured knowledge He had of His Heavenly Father's grace, that He had no difficulty in warranting the disciples' confidence as to heaven. Theirs was the natural belief and was His own. "In My Father's house," He says,¹ "are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." When He says,² "It is written in the Prophets, And they shall all be taught of God," and adds: "Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me," He lets us see that He is arriving by ordinary human processes at a truth otherwise hidden, and arguing from a position in the epourania. The same thing is seen even more clearly when He says,³ "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you"; or ⁴ "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

There are many results which might have been attained in the same way. It was easy for Him to see as a deduction from His divinity that "he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it";⁵ and, as an inference from His mission, that He was speaking to the Kosmos and not to His own nation, or even to His own age only;⁶ that He had many sheep which were not of the Jewish fold;⁷ and that His followers were the light and salt of the earth.⁸ From the assurance of His Heavenly Father's love, it was easy not only to see the same care exercised

¹ John xiv. 2.² John vi. 45.³ John xv. 19.⁴ John viii. 24.⁵ Matt. x. 39.⁶ John iii. 17, ix. 5, xii. 47.⁷ John x. 16.⁸ Matt. v. 13, 14.

over the brute creation as over men, but to extend the application practically to the duty of a life of faith by men, and, first of all, by Himself. Nay, from this same root He derived His encouragement to, and so His experience of God in prayer; for He rested that duty mainly on the character of God. "Ask and it shall be given you. . . . For every one that asketh receiveth."¹ Ye shall not be heard for your much asking, "for your Heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."² "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"³ In like manner the teaching set forth in the parable of the wicked husbandmen,⁴ as to the Jewish Church, would have been impossible but for His conception of the value of His own person; nor could the parable of the great supper⁵ and its views have been possible but for the grace which He believed lay in the very heart of, and formed His mission.

The action of the epourania in shaping the moral judgments of His conscience can be seen, for instance, when He has no hesitancy in saying, from what He knows of the God He reverences, "Neither did this man sin, nor His parents,"⁶ that he was born blind. On the other hand, the spiritual standard of right, which He found in His conscience, was most likely the origin of His exalted ideas of the Holy Father. He could reverence only the God who embodied its ideal. His appreciation of the moral law was instinctive; His perception of its

¹ Matt. vii. 7.² Matt. vi. 7, 8.³ Matt. vii. 11.⁴ Mark xii. 1 ff.⁵ Luke xiv. 16 ff.⁶ John ix. 3.

absolute necessity, and His own submission to it, were unhesitating and absolute. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil,"¹ was the only position He could take up. To destroy the law was for Him with His nature impossible, and to fulfil it was, with His views, unavoidable. His conscience directed Him to make righteousness the rule of His life; and He would have maintained it in that position even if its results had had no bearing upon us.

He sets it up, therefore, as the standard for everyone. "Except your righteousness," He says,² "shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." The place He gave it in life is shown in His words,³ "Seek ye first His" (God's) "kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." This explains, too, the anger roused in Him at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. And when one remembers how that represents only the open breach which all along really separated Him from them, one sees how much His pure conscience and the accompanying conception of God in the epourania had to do with the fate He met. Their conscience was as far debased as His was developed; they were as far from righteousness as He was righteous. He saw that they had no appreciation of the law, were unlike it, and so made it void by their traditions. He understood why they laid "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne" on others, yet would "not move them with their finger";⁴ they had no sense of obligation to the law and its God; they sought the praise of men, not of God: "All their works they do to be

¹ Matt. v. 17.

² Matt. vi. 33.

³ Matt. v. 20.

⁴ Matt. xxiii. 4.

seen of men.”¹ We are apt to wonder at the bitterness of His contempt for them, or to question the justice of the invectives He showered on them. But these were nothing more than the expression of His own moral intensity, and of the absolute supremacy in His life of His own earnest conscience.

If the spirituality of the law in His conscience led Him up to the spirituality of God, the love of God, on the other hand, seems to have enabled Him to know the love which is in the heart of the law. The need of love to God and man came from belief in the Father’s love. Lovelessness meant in His eyes fruitlessness and formality. His conscience and love went straight towards judgment and mercy, which He saw to be the weighty matters of the law. His conviction that in time men would not, either in this mountain (Samaria), or in Jerusalem, worship the Father,² was the result of His assurance that the spiritual conscience in man, which was the counterpart of the spiritual God, would yet assert itself, in spite of all its degradation, that men made for God—for the living God—would not be able to endure formality for ever, and that when this faculty was enlightened and its power awakened by His work, then men would worship the spiritual God in spirit and in truth.

This was the source, too, in which He saw reflected as a duty, the heavenly grace of forbearance exercised by God,³ and the necessity of extending forgiveness, if forgiveness were to be in turn hoped for by us,⁴ ay, the

¹ Matt. xxiii. 5.

² Matt. vi. 12.

³ John iv. 21.

⁴ Mark xi. 26.

God-like duty of forgiving, even a brother, till seventy times seven.¹ No special foreknowledge, but the gracious securities only which conscience afforded, enabled Him to say that "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward";² or that allied passage,³ "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me"; for, in His eyes, life derived its worth from loyalty to conscience and clearness of moral vision. In the same way He reached that allied yet contrasted conclusion,⁴ "ye shall die in your sin"; for the explanation of how it was reached is expressly added: "I said *therefore*, ye shall die in your sins; *for*, except ye believe that I am He, ye *shall* die in your sins."

It hardly needs to be said now that our Saviour gained much of His knowledge by His experience and His intercourse with men. Already we have seen this in special cases, and as to particular truths. For instance, no one can doubt it was due to years of observation ere He came forth that, at the very beginning of His ministry, "He needed not that anyone should bear witness concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man."⁵ Nay, one can imagine he sees the process at work in the child of twelve, when, after years of quick-eyed observation, and mere uniformity of result, the boy came to the temple, and not only listened, but asked questions at those who ought both to be best and to know most. In the same way He could commit Himself to

¹ Matt. xviii. 22, 35.

² Matt. x. 42.

³ Matt. xxv. 40.

⁴ John viii. 21.

⁵ John ii. 25.

such a great truth as, "Out of the heart come forth . . . the things which defile,"¹ and act on it as absolute, applying it universally. By this means the case of those who did not come to the light opened out: "They loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil."² "Ye will not come to Me," He says, "that ye may have life."³

Of course there are other positions which naturally followed from these great inductive truths—among them the necessity of regeneration, or of conversion, and of becoming like little children, and the absolute need of the Holy Ghost as the power of God by which such effects might be produced.

By this process Christ was doubtless shut up to many lesser, but by no means unimportant conclusions—for instance, the difficulty of saving the rich; the fact that not those who appeared most righteous, or made the greatest profession, were the nearest to the kingdom; that though the best of men must rely on Him, yet for Him to rely even on the best of them would be to rest on a bruised reed; that the best of men needed His salvation and prayers, and were safe only because of His work and faithfulness; that the work of saving was so really His, and His alone, as to be entirely His; that even sympathy, watchfulness, appreciation, was hardly to be looked for from the most advanced.

Finally, one cannot doubt that Christ learned much of positive holiness by His own experience. We may take the beatitudes as expressing His views of the fundamental relations of spiritual life. Yet, if we reflect,

¹ Matt. xv. 19.

² John iii. 19.

³ John v. 40.

we see that they were not glimpses of spiritual illumination, or a part of His Divine knowledge, or reminiscences, like echoes, out of a heavenly state. They belonged to earthly conditions, and came by earthly experience. They expressed the ripe conclusions of His own life. That the poor in spirit were heirs of the kingdom was not a fact gained by observation, but by His own experience of a dark, dependent humanity and its needs. Similarly, He who was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with griefs; the preacher whose first word was repent, but who was despised and rejected; the poor workman, who knew that the trials of His lot were not its smallest blessings, and that "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life,"¹ had no difficulty in seeing that, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." His whole way of living, and His method of carrying through His work, was a continuous example of meekness, an unceasing self-obliteration of legitimate claims and personal rights. Its anticipations expressed themselves deliberately in the words, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."² These anticipations were not in doubt; they had come by His own experience, and grown into convictions, enabling Him to persevere in such a line of life. They pledged the future, for they filled the present. Experience of this bliss enabled Him to say, "Come unto Me, for I am meek." Moreover, had He ever found anything truer in His own experience than that those "who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled"?³ Did not His experience of it lead Him forth

¹ John x. 17.² Matt. v. 5.³ Matt. v. 6.

in whole-hearted devotion, and constrain Him to make the example of it the great aim of His life? He dedicated Himself expressly and openly to that in the words, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." By the very nature of the case, the saying, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy,"¹ could hardly be a hope arising out of His own experience. Yet it was no less sure; for it is either a deduction from the fact that God could not be less morally magnanimous than man, or, as is more likely, from His perception that God could not save except under certain conditions, and could not therefore withhold salvation when these were complied with; in either case the truth would be an inference from the epourania. The blessedness of the pure in heart, however, as possessing the vision of God, or the assurance of it, lets us see deep into His own experience, and its development under the blessed Spirit. The blessedness of the peacemakers, too, tells the tale of His heart, as the Son of God come to make peace through the blood of the Cross, and to give men His own peace. The blessedness of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake was His first of all, and pre-eminently, for He was Lord in the kingdom of heaven and heir of its glory. Both for Him, and for others, there was not peace but a sword; yet the firm conviction of what must come in the end was the hope which sustained Him, and which He proffered to them. "Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake . . . : for great is your reward in heaven."² In the same way He reached not merely the emblems

¹ Matt. v. 7.² Matt. v. 11.

used in His parables, but the truths they taught; it was His experience which had forced on Him, for instance, the truths taught by the sower, the drag-net, and the seed growing secretly. The impossibility of serving two masters might have been learned by observation, but was rather the knowledge obtained by loyal obedience to a deep-seated instinct. When He said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me,"¹ He spoke only what He Himself knew of the way He had already trodden. When He said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother,"² He stated nothing but the feeling which rose in His own heart naturally. The view that, "It must needs be that the occasions" (of stumbling) "come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!"³ was a generalisation of His own experience, warranted by the life common to Himself and His people; whilst He who commanded His disciples to watch, and both taught and practised prayer, lived by these methods with a success visible in the moral victory of which His life was never vacant.

From what we have seen there can be no doubt as to the remarkable nature of Christ's conscience. It was a wonderful development, and a constantly paramount influence. It was fed and strengthened by the epourania. The facts found in that source became its standard and principles. Loyalty to them brought enlarged practical knowledge by the Holy Ghost. Experience of Himself and others both deepened and matured it.

¹ Matt. xvi. 24.² Matt. xii. 50.³ Matt. xviii. 7.

His ethical views were formed by great principles on spiritual lines. To Him the motive was everything, for good or evil. Every act was gauged according to its spirit and not its letter. Consequently, He could not help coming into violent contact with the opinions which prevailed in current religious life around Him. "He that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon; and he that sweareth by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein; and he that sweareth by the heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon."¹ Yet to His conscience He was loyal; and in His loyalty were created its perfectness and His worth. "My judgment is righteous," He asserts; "because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."² "How can ye believe," He asks, "which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?"³

¹ Matt xxiii. 20-22.² John v. 30.³ John v. 44.

CHAPTER VI

CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

WE cannot tell what opportunities our Saviour had of gaining a knowledge of the Old Testament. It is quite likely that He never possessed a copy of that book, or even of any part of it. It is more than probable that He had to depend on the public reading of it, and the training which that gave, or on kindly opportunities, the record of which is now lost.

Jesus Christ had no special facilities for a knowledge of the Word of God; yet He gives evidence of minute and extensive acquaintance with it. Enthusiasm and appreciation, longing and love, must have conquered all difficulties. Of course He quotes more largely from some of the books than from others, but that does not betray partiality for the former, or ignorance of the latter. For many, almost all, of the quotations are the result of circumstances. They were prompted rather by need than choice. They were directed against enemies, like the Tempter and the Pharisees. Apart from such considerations, however, there is ample evidence that Christ had an extensive knowledge of the Old Testament. He quotes from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings,

2 Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Jonah, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Moreover, possibly because He could not depend on a scroll, His references are often both minute and accurate. Sometimes, indeed, they are so general that one can hardly identify the passage represented; *e.g.* "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."¹ His language is, however, exceptionally exact, as a rule, and His knowledge of the text unusually minute. He sometimes builds His argument on a single word, and even an idea expressed (without a word), by the mere form of the original, as when He argues from "I am the God of Abraham,"² and brings out of it a meaning hitherto unsuspected, yet approved the moment it was shown. He forsakes the Hebrew and agrees with the Septuagint when it suits His meaning, and modifies even the version He is following, as when He says, "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me,"³ etc. But when He quotes loosely, He evidently does so because He attaches no importance to the words of the particular passage.

There is ample evidence that Christ's knowledge of the Old Testament was thoughtful. It is natural for such parts of that book as relate to the manna and the brazen serpent, the Queen of Sheba and the Prophet Jonah, to catch the attention of even a hasty reader; but Christ had an eye for small and seemingly unimportant points, as we shall see, because He sought in them also the treasure of spiritual truth. Sometimes

¹ John vii. 38.

² Matt. xxii. 32.

³ Matt. xv. 8, 9.

the truth He taught was an inference from a passage which others would have passed by. Thus He had observed that, though in the time of the Prophet Elijah there were many widows in Israel needing help, God sent to one only, and her an outsider; and that though there were many lepers in Israel needing help when Elisha cured one Naaman, an outsider, He helped none of them.¹ The Saviour had been looking all round these facts in detail, and had seen the possibilities they involved. His keen spiritual instinct, as it read the passage, caught, in what others hastened past thoughtlessly, a tone of emphasis, and found in it a spiritual truth.

Thus we begin to see that Christ studied the Old Testament, not for the sake of procuring mere facts, but for spiritual principles. He wished not to tabulate, or even to store its contents, but to amalgamate them, to enrich and strengthen His soul by them. No doubt He obtained from it a history of the world's past of which He was naturally ignorant; and in it He found, as we shall see, many things that related to Himself. It set a world of men and women before Him; it broadened and gave universal validity to His own experience of human beings; it was to Him a storehouse of spiritual standards and aims and longings; by it His conscience opened and matured into full beauty. But what He sought was spiritual principle in the line of the epourania; He desired to find their working in worldly applications, and to see the way in which He Himself ought to carry them out.

¹ Luke iv. 25-27.

This saved Christ from literalism, even when He was giving attention to minor points. He did not judge of the importance of any passage by the number of square inches which it occupied, or the number of words used in relating it. He judged of it according as it revealed spiritual truth, and sent that home to His own heart. He spoke violently against the traditionalists and formalists, because the Book had proved so real a blessing to Himself. The fact is, the Old Testament opened out to the Saviour's wondering eye a panoramic record of general principles, all of which appealed to Him, and showed the Jehovah of the Old Testament to be the God of His own conscience. His eye caught these instinctively, as if they had been veins of gold in the solid rock. Special truths found a place in His heart, and secured the retention in His mind of the passage or occasion in which they were found. All His sympathies and longings were satisfied with what He saw in these; they were the actings of His Heavenly Father, and showed the application of the epourania in the domain of earthly life. He saw the same righteousness, the same justice, the same holiness, the same mercy and truth and love, as He found in the epourania and in His own conscience. Therefore the God of the Book, the God of whom it spake and whom it revealed, made it attractive to Jesus. The Saviour found there Him who was His model, and was confirmed as to righteousness and duty. For instance, who can fail to mark, from the way in which Christ quotes it, all that such a text as, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice,"¹ meant for Him? It ran so clearly in

¹ Hosea vi. 6.

the line of the epourania, and applied them so deftly to men's needs, that it was to Him the very essence of God's will. He felt it expressed exactly His own whole-hearted desire. He felt that in it His God spake, the Father He saw in the epourania, one whom He could respect, and was bound to worship for His very worth. In the same way He was assured of the law of love as the secret of the commandments, and found it to be common ground in God's heart with His own.

Now, I think it was this habit of looking for great general principles in the Old Testament which must have enabled Jesus to grasp the unity of the Book. He found the same principles running through it with repeated and varied applications. The circumstances changed, but these, *i.e.* God, did not; consequently, the Old Testament became in our Saviour's eyes a record of providence. The presence of God in history meant for Him its continuity. The books became, not the isolated productions they would appear to most, but a succession of illustrative selections from a developing whole, which had to be read, each part in view of that, and of its general aim. By means of this, Christ was able not only to speak with clear ideas of the unity of history, but of its cumulative force. He was able not only to compare Himself with Solomon,¹ or Jerusalem with Nineveh,² or the towns of Galilee with the cities of the plain,³ but to predict doom on His own generation for all the righteous blood shed from the time of Abel to Zechariah,⁴ who was martyred in the latter

¹ Matt. xii. 42.

² Matt. x. 15.

³ Matt. xii. 41.

⁴ Matt. xxiii. 35.



part of the reign of Joash for reproving the wickedness of the people.

Further, Christ unquestionably founded on a clear conception of the advance of history. This comes out by His comparison of the cities of the plain in Lot's time with the Galilean towns of His own day. But it comes out even more strikingly in the exposure of the ignorant, unsympathetic position of the formalists whom He met. They decorated the tombs of the prophets, and said, If we had lived in their time, we would not have done as our fathers did.¹ But, as the Saviour remarked, by taking up such a position, they only showed that they were the children of those who had slain the prophets—not children in any mere external sense, but spiritually—true descendants in heart. For evidently they had no idea of what they owed to the intervening generations, or that any position more advanced than their own might come to be held. They were self-righteous and blind, ignorant and fanatical, prejudiced and narrow as really as their fathers had been. And that they were soon to show in their treatment of One who was greater than all the prophets. They had not read the Book with spiritual appreciation. It had not led them to God. They could not go forward, for they were not led of God. To Christ the history which He saw in the Old Testament was full of movement, ay, of a definite movement, a tendency, a progress forwards to a clearly settled end. Providence, as the whole Book showed, had an aim, and one which was drawing near its fulfilment.

¹ Matt. xxiii. 29, 30.

One of the effects which the reading of the Book had on Christ was, that He found Himself able to see spiritual connections, and to predict spiritual developments, impossible to those who were spiritually blind and in heart dead. His use of the Old Testament shows that, as He read, He was always looking for the spiritual situation and its peculiarities. He thus read His surroundings, and the situation in His own time, after the light He obtained in it. He argued from the unchangeableness of God, and the constancy of His methods, to the way in which He would act. Circumstances, though changing, neither blinded nor puzzled Him; He gave all His attention to the principles they involved. Thus He must have seen in the entry of the Israelites into Canaan, not far from the spot where He was tempted, something which reminded Him that He was entering on His own ministry, and which suggested to Him a suitable passage with which to resist the Tempter. John the Baptist was for Him Elias,¹ because he came in the spirit and power of that prophet, though John had distinctly told the emissaries of the spiritual rulers from Jerusalem that he was not that man of old, whom he so resembled.² David's transgression of the ceremonial law appealed to Him,³ not because He was greater than David, but because the need was similar. In Jonah's mission to unrepentant Nineveh He felt a premonition of His own in Israel,⁴ and in the brazen serpent He saw a foreshadowing of what the end must come to be.⁵

¹ Matt. xvii. 11, 12.² John i. 21-25.³ Matt. xii. 3.⁴ Matt. xii. 39.⁵ John iii. 14.

Christ goes the length of making this the basis, if not the very essence, of prophecy. The possibility of prophesying arises out of the fact that God always acts in the same way, when there is repeated, whether in the same form or not, the same situation. Thus Jesus takes a quotation from Isaiah,¹ slightly modifying the version of the Septuagint, "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me ; but in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."² Now, undoubtedly, the only reference which was in the prophet's mind was to the people of his own day and land. Their trust in Jehovah had become nothing better than formal, and was no longer such as could save them from the surrounding nations. But, as Christ saw, the spiritual situation had repeated itself, and even more emphatically ; consequently He appropriated the warning given then, feeling warranted, because it was more applicable, and because God intended it to belong to His time by pre-eminence. In the same way we find Him appropriating to His own position what the writer in the Psalms thought of in connection only with himself. He claims, on this principle, that verse, "He that eateth My bread lifted up his heel against Me."³ In fact, we find Him choosing fragments of passages and piecing them together after His own will, but with unerring instinct. For example, by the union of two Old Testament passages,⁴ breathing the same spirit, He creates the passage, "It is written, My house shall be called

¹ Matt. xv. 8.

² Isa. xxix. 13.

³ John xiii. 18 ; Ps. xli. 9.

⁴ Matt. xxi. 13 ; Isa. lvi. 7 ; Jer. vii. 11.

a house of prayer, but ye make it a den of robbers." So He chooses parts out of psalms, which otherwise would hardly be reckoned appropriate to Him, as if anything in the experience of a true Israelite might find its final and ripe fulfilment in Himself. He was all unconscious of arbitrariness; for He felt Himself vindicated spiritually.

Reading the Old Testament continuously, as the record of God's presence in the world, made the Saviour clear that a definite purpose had been present from the first. As He found, the object was that very one which was dearest to His own heart, and was the aim and rule of His life. He saw that the attributes of God in the history always showed themselves in a balanced relation to one another; they appeared in due proportion, because they inhered in, and were exercised by, God. Their combination thus always implied some phase of grace. All the history was an example of grace on God's part. But the object of grace had made itself clearer in the course of the ages—for instance, in the notable saying, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice."¹ So that Jesus not only felt Himself in deepest sympathy with the movement, or even in the line of it, but in its very focus, filling the position in connection with it which He most desired. He found Himself to be claimed by, and put into relation to, the whole. The Father needed, had prepared for, had predicted, His coming to be the people's Messiah and the world's Saviour. The endowment which He had of epourania by His heavenly origin met itself here from the other side face

¹ Hosea vi. 6.

to face, saw in God what it had been sure was in God, and found itself confirmed and satisfied.

This supplied Jesus with the application He should make to His own day of the cumulative power in history. The responsibility of His own age over preceding generations was the result of the advance made, and of the predictions fulfilled, by His own presence. Many prophets and righteous men of old had desired to see what those round Him saw, and were not permitted.¹ So that again it becomes evident that Jesus did not recognise His Sonship by His Messiahship, after He was called forth to work, or even had been for some time at work. No doubt the Old Testament mark of Messiahship was the possession of the Spirit; and at the very beginning of His ministry² Jesus pointed to that as the sign by which the Jews, like the Baptist, might be sure of Him.³ But it does not follow that He recognised Himself by this means. As we have seen, He says⁴ that His Messianic calling is vindicated not by His Davidic descent but by His Divine origin. We can hardly therefore imagine that the recognition of Himself as Son of God came by the information which the Old Testament supplied as to the Spirit, even though the possession of the Spirit was His qualification for being the Messiah, or the mark in the eyes of others that He was it.

We have already seen the overwhelming sense of responsibility which our Saviour in His weak humanity sometimes felt by reason of the burdensome sense of His

¹ Matt. xiii. 17.

² John i. 33.

³ Luke iv. 18.

⁴ Matt. xxii. 41 ff.

great mission. And we have seen that in special crises God gave Him guidance and assurance by means of information purely supernatural. But God gave Him in the Old Testament—as He evidently believed—a store of material which He dared not neglect, as it was invaluable in giving Him glimpses of His future, sufficient at least to enable Him to carry out the work He had undertaken. There can be no doubt that Jesus studied the Word, not for His own spiritual enlightenment merely, but in order to know the facts which had been predicted about Himself. These were like landmarks, or finger-posts to Him. In His view, it could not be but that the Scriptures must be fulfilled. He not only expected the things He found predicted, He set Himself expressly to bring them to pass at the right time. For instance, He faced death consciously, as predicted of Him, when He raised Lazarus; and He entered Jerusalem on an ass's colt because of the view He held of a passage in the Old Testament. The promises of the Spirit to the Messiah He appropriated and relied on;¹ and He stamped His people with the same sign, again from the same source,² "They shall all be taught of God." In John the Baptist, as His Elias-like forerunner, He saw the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy, and came forth.³ But specially He searched the Old Testament to form a spiritual history of His own future, according to the forebodings of the epourania. Possibly from the use of Scripture He made up His mind—as appears early in His ministry—that it was most suitable He should

¹ Isa. lxi. 6.² Isa. liv. 13.³ Mal. iv. 5, 6; Luke i. 17; Matt. iv. 12, 18.

die at a passover season. That feast very probably attracted His eye, because in His death there was fulfilled the emblem of the rite, and by it the reality spoken of was given. Undoubtedly some of the events by which He was able to control His death became known to Him then. He not only saw the fact of His death by means of the uplifted serpent of brass, He must have come to know its method by such Scriptures as John quotes, or by such a text as "They pierced My hands and My feet."¹ He knew of His betrayal and His treatment by professed friends from the Psalmist's words, "He that eateth My bread lifted up his heel against Me,"² and by the prophet's prediction, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered abroad."³ He understood from the first, or at least expected the treatment He received, by the expression, "They hated Me without a cause,"⁴ whilst its end was not hidden, because of the evangelical prophet's announcement, "He was numbered with the transgressors."⁵ He knew of His formal trial and sentence from the same source,⁶ and of His rejection by the rulers of His own people, for He was "the stone which the builders rejected."⁷ His mind was full of the detail of His death beforehand. He spoke of the place, of the scribes and chief priests as its source, and the Gentiles as the means they used, and of its accompaniments—mocking, spitting, scourging—with as much clearness as of His resurrection.⁸ So, too, He seems to have taken particular interest in locating

¹ John xix. 37; Ps. xxii. 16.

² Matt. xxvi. 31; Zech. xiii. 7.

³ Luke xxii. 37; Isa. liii. 12.

⁴ Matt. xxi. 42; Ps. cxviii. 22.

⁵ John xiii. 18; Ps. xli. 9.

⁶ John xv. 25; Ps. lxix. 4, 5.

⁷ Isa. liii. 8; Mark x. 33.

⁸ Matt. xx. 18; Mark x. 33.

the facts as they came near. He says, for instance,¹ "All ye shall be offended in Me *this night*: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." When He says He is being "numbered with the transgressors,"² He adds the reason, "For this which is written must be fulfilled in Me; for that which concerneth Me hath fulfilment,"³ i.e., His humiliation had reached its lowest stage. When He points to the bitter hatred of His enemies, He does not base it on the radical opposition of good and evil, but on the prediction, "They hated Me without a cause."⁴ Strauss rightly enough remarks that as Jesus Himself in His announcement of His sufferings expressly appealed to the Old Testament, the prophecies of which concerning Himself must be fulfilled at all points, the orthodox view ought not to despise this help, but must give to its explanation the modification, that Jesus, continually occupied with the prophecies of the Old Testament, may have drawn these particulars out of them by the aid of the Holy Spirit which dwelt in Him.

Yet we must be careful. One cannot imagine that Christ on the Cross, in order to retain the outer and literal fulfilment of any prophecy, said, "I thirst."⁵ The other expressions as He hangs dying are all instinctive embodiments of real feeling. Old Testament forms were natural, because the Saviour's mind was so steeped in the language and thought of the Book that they came without reflection to Him, and sprang up as the most fitting. The intensity of His emotions at the time

¹ Matt. xxvi. 31.² Isa. liii. 12.³ Luke xxii. 37.⁴ John xv. 25; Ps. lxix. 4.⁵ John xix. 28.

when He cried with a loud voice, prohibit the possibility of calculation on His part. When He cried, "I thirst," the Crucified One was thinking of the relief He would soon have in the presence and favour of God. The Psalmist's longing for God, the living God, was in Christ's hour of desertion His deepest longing also. Yet, all unconsciously and without intention on His part, the Saviour's words led to the fulfilment of a prophecy He had not been thinking of when they gave Him vinegar to drink.¹

Whilst, as a rule, the quotations which Jesus makes from the Old Testament are accurate, even in their letter, one feels that they are never wrenched from their context, but are unusually accurate and true in spirit. One feels they are quoted by a person who has grasped the spiritual situation, and in such a matter never makes a mistake; who feels, and is sure that He Himself never makes a mistake. Besides that, one is struck by this: they are the quotations of one who has no interest to gain by them but what is practical, for whom the present is real and the wellbeing of men overwhelming. Israel's situation at entering the promised land pointed to His own. He saw His own fate in that of "the servant of God." Elijah's day and mission pointed to His own. The hardened people of Jeremiah's time represented those of His own day. The responsibilities entailed by Noah and Lot heightened the effect of that which His own presence involved.

Now, this is what explains the aptness of Christ's quotations. What He adduced was spoken readily,

¹ Matt. xxvii. 34; Ps. lxi. 21.

because it applied appropriately. His knowledge was not of mere detail, a confused mass of lumber, over-laying and cumbering, and capable only of a haphazard use, but masterly and of principle; one that found its illustrations readily; a knowledge of fact by conscience and judgment, rather than from mere memory, imparted by the Spirit's teaching and not man's. The facts He had learned from the Old Testament had been gained under the guidance and were seen in the light of the epourania; and so they had passed into, and become illustrations of, the spiritual principles which filled Him. Thus it came to pass that even when questioned suddenly, His immediate and apt reply sometimes led far further than anyone had ever imagined. For instance, what hints and possibilities must have been clear to Him who, in the phrase "I am the God of Abraham," saw rather the faithfulness of God than of His servant, and made it a guarantee of eternal life; who solved the question of heavenly relationships with the remark "they are as angels in heaven,"¹ i.e. stand in direct relation to God as if by separate creation, and not to one another as by descent; and who added the comment, "Ye do err, not knowing *the Scriptures*, nor the power of God."² Satan, in his use of Scripture, could not for a moment stand before Christ, any more than could the Sadducees or scribes. The devil's quotations suited his own purpose, but they were not apt; they did not really apply. Therefore Christ's honesty and earnestness, His spiritual instinct against all falsity and sham, recoiled from them. He felt they could not be right,

¹ Mark xii. 25.² Matt. xxii. 29.

when they were contrary to the spirit of the Book, or of its God and His epourania. Their spirit savoured of earth, not of heaven. When Satan quoted incompletely, Christ felt the sentiment was rendered untrue to the context¹ from which it had been torn. The promise quoted was not true as Satan quoted it. It was true of and was made to Him only who abode under the shadow of the Almighty; it was not true for or made to him who acted in self-confidence, or placed himself under the patronage and guidance of the Evil One. Christ felt the chill of falsity in it at once, and knew there was error in it somewhere. He shrank from it just as from the pharisaic use of Corban.

One does not wonder, accordingly, to find that Christ never twisted Scripture to His own ends, or attempted to allegorise it. He did not need to do so; its letter required no twisting, for it yielded its truth willingly. The methods He followed were in spirit correct, and are such as the educated conscience of the world approves to this day.

But nothing strikes one more forcibly than this, that whilst Christ valued Scripture thus highly, He did not feel Himself tied down to it. He made it a starting not a resting place. Its authority He considered absolute, but not final. He got much from it, but He brought more to it. For Him His own conscience, in which the epourania became, through the Holy Spirit, the rule of His human life, was supreme and final. He used the Old Testament to see how its principles worked; He quoted the Book to teach these, and show what they

¹ Ps. xci. 11, 12.

involved, because for both Satan and the people it, rather than He, was the undeniable authority. Ye search the Scriptures, He says; but the necessity was for others rather than Himself. "These are they," He says, "which bear witness of Me," *i.e.* exist for Me, and do service for My sake. Thus He quotes the letter of the text freely, according to the Hebrew, or Greek, or a version of His own. He is more careful of His end than of His means; He acts with perfect freedom, as if quite sure of Himself and of the accuracy of His methods. When He alters the meaning, He makes a real advance, and creates a real improvement. Thus, from the quotation out of Deuteronomy above referred to,¹ "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," He elicits the fact that not even the things which God produces by His word, wonderful though these be, are the things essential to life, or on which it depends. For the case of the Jews in the wilderness, who were fed with manna, went no further. But He turned the history round so as to show that the Word of God, being expressive of His will, is all-important, and that man, who is a spiritual being, depends, and was intended to be nourished on it, rather than on what it creates.

But all this freedom in the handling of Scripture comes partly from a skill, the result of the sure insight He had into its spirit, and partly from a lordliness over it, shown by His perfect fulfilment of its demands.

Christ not only set Himself against the mere literalism of the Pharisees, He denounced the perverted and

¹ Deut. viii. 3; Luke iv. 4; Matt. iv. 4.

partial views they held about the Scripture. They neither knew the Scripture nor the power of God. They seemed to think that everything began with Moses, and even ended with him too. They forgot, when convenient, that earlier than he, and in covenant with God, had been Abraham. They were blind to the fact that conscience was fitted to be a more complete directory for man than the law. They did not see that the law was only a device, an expedient,—temporary and imperfect,—which the circumstances of the people had necessitated. They did not know that it was not what God had desired to give, but only such as the people could receive. They had no conception that it had come in the interests of conscience—dulled and blunted—to quicken, rouse, and educate; that it had not been given to supplant conscience, to render it unnecessary or to dwarf it, but to supplement and bring it again to its royal place and its unerring activities.

As Christ conceived, the ceremonial part of the law existed for the moral. It had been given for the good of man, and for no other end. Its abuse, as He held, began the moment it clashed with the natural moral law of conscience. That David and Abimelech should have taken the show bread, which it was not lawful but for the priests to eat, was, He thought, lawful, because right; it was defensible; nay, it was in the circumstances obligatory, because warrantable; it fell, indeed, under the ban of the ceremonial law, but the will of God was more absolute; and His will, lying at the base of all natural duty, was expressed in the great principle, "I desire mercy,

and not sacrifice." David was the spiritual man of the Old Testament, as well as God's representative in the theocracy of his day, and he showed no hesitancy in the matter. David had not acted selfishly, but rightly; he had seen the law was never intended to hurt, but always to help men; that it was made for man, and not man for it.

Similarly, in dealing with the Sabbath question, which stood on the borders of the ceremonial and moral departments in the law, Christ solved difficulties by running all cases up to general principles; and He did that on this point by bringing in the earlier dispensation where it had been at first introduced. The priests, as He pointed out,¹ performed sacrifices which were purely ceremonial, and violated the Sabbath; they performed circumcision on the Sabbath,² lest the matter should be unduly delayed. They broke the sanctity of the day, yet were not blamed. No one thought they had done wrong in these matters. Consequently the observance of the day was not such as the Pharisees demanded; the priests themselves supplied instances to the contrary. If they had understood the very theory they thus exemplified, they would have seen that it lay in this—the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.³

The law of Moses had been useful, but only as an adaptation. It was an attempt to help feeble consciences to work out the detail of duty. In the matter of marriage, as Christ pointed out, Moses had granted divorce, merely because of the sinful elements which

¹ Matt. xii. 5.

² John vii. 22.

³ Mark ii. 27.

entered into their experience. He gave it, as Christ said, only "for your hardness of heart: but from the beginning it hath not been so."¹ God had made them at first male and female, and "For *this cause* shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they twain shall become one flesh."² In all this Christ let us see how the knowledge of moral principle as absolute, and the power of applying it unerringly by methods of conscience, was not only the perfect way of life, but His own way.

Yet, as one observes, He did not undervalue the law. He only objected to it being put in a place and taxed with a work for which it was unfit and never intended, and because it would then be unfairly blamed for the failure. That He found its use for Himself, as a starting-point and treasury, is clear by the enthusiastic way in which He speaks of it. In its own domain it was absolute, and for its own purpose perfect. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall";³ and "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven."⁴ As He pointed out in regard to those who had only received the law as an external thing, the privilege conferred, even in that, was so great that the Old Testament, God Himself, had said of them, "I said, Ye are gods."⁵ It is impossible to miss the respect, and esteem, and hope He had for the young man who believed he had kept all the law. But as little is it

¹ Matt. xix. 8.

² Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 5.

³ Luke xvi. 17.

⁴ Matt. v. 19.

⁵ John x. 34.

possible to miss the emphasis with which He enunciated His answer to the lawyer's question,¹ Which is the great commandment in the law? Perfect love to God, said He; with a second, which is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The former questioner looked at the commands, the Saviour emphasised to the latter their spirit. Though the wrong spirit looked at the bare detail, and was satisfied with that, partial and poor, no man who had its spirit could afford or dare to despise any part of it. He only was perfect in it who had risen above its details, so as to fulfil them all instinctively and gladly, under the promptings of the law in His conscience. The emphasis which Christ placed on the second part of the law was the novelty. No Jew thought the second equal to the first. Only He did who saw in the great principle, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," both God's wish and man's duty. He applied its admission under the first table, to secure its presence as the explanation of the second. How could murder be prevented but by preventing first hatred, and malice, and contempt of one's brother? The popular view of the Old Testament teaching on the subject, arising out of the defective training of the people, was that wrong against one's neighbour needs atonement; but the law as Christ felt it inculcated by conscience, was that wrong done me by my neighbour I will not feel to be such, hating him as an enemy, but will look on it as an opportunity of doing him good, and of his need of being redeemed from his evil through my love of him.

This law of love, by which the Saviour appreciated and

¹ Matt. xxii. 36 ff.

used yet rose above the law, made Him its master. Men who knew nothing of the law in its spirit suspected He wished to destroy it; they did not see that He did more than that, fulfilling and superseding it, that He gave it its rightful honour, although He refused to give it His own. In fulfilling it He gave it its due, but also showed Himself as to conscience and moral life larger than it; He supplanted it by being what was both more perfect and more practical. In Himself He was its substitute by being its superior and by showing its object attained. His conscience owed much to it, but the fulfilment He gave it was all His own.

What we have already seen has made clear that Christ studied the Old Testament for practical ends, as an aid to His own soul, as a guide in regard to man and to God, and as a help to Himself in the accomplishment of His mission. These were the points of overwhelming importance to Him. His whole being was concentrated on the attaining of them. He had neither time nor taste for any other. Specially abstract points, if they ever occurred to Him, seem to have been in His eyes of no moment. They were merely things of earth, which had no bearing on His duty as a man or as the Saviour. The difficulties and apparent contradictions which, then as now, lay scattered over the face of the Old Testament, were probably not unnoticed by Him; for there is plenty of evidence that He was an acute reader. But He seems to have felt them as little as the hard matters in His own sayings, which seem strange to us, such as: "All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me, and him that cometh to Me I will

in no wise cast out." They certainly did not affect His faith in the Book itself. Either He had a more complete theory of inspiration than we have, or, as is more likely, a more perfect knowledge of the God spoken of. For Him the Book was a whole, the record of God's gracious purpose. It was not a collection of scattered books, differing in their authority. For Him the proof of its authority lay in the God it represented consistently and unerringly throughout the fluctuations of history, and in the purpose it set forth as developing and ripening under that God's hand. His conscience and its epourania recognised therein the God of heaven, the God of grace. The way in which He quoted from Genesis about the male and female,¹ and from the Psalms as to Himself,² is clear enough evidence that His attention was fixed on central verities and moral situations, and that in accepting the Book He was acting not blindly or according to the habit of the Jews, who relied mainly on external testimony, but on internal evidence. And He, of all others, was calculated to use that delicate method infallibly: He assuredly was warranted in its use.

I presume, then, that Christ had no critical methods or intellectual tests to apply to Scripture, but rather that He used His general intelligence, and those spiritual instincts in which He has ever been unequalled, and even unapproached. When the spirit in Him rang response to that which spake to Him in the passage, He needed to inquire no further. His conscience approved; He had only to follow. He used the Book just as any good and intelligent man would. His quota-

¹ Matt. xix. 4.; Gen. i. 27, ii. 24.

² Ps. cx.; Matt. xxii. 44.

tions from it are as different from those of His contemporaries, even from those of the apostles, notwithstanding that they were influenced in this too by Him, as He Himself was different from them.

As nothing in the Book, then, had interest for Him but the presence of God and the growth of His spiritual purpose, we must believe that in speaking of the authorship of any part He does so in a merely general way, taking the title as in the scroll. There is no reason to doubt His belief of the point; only, if He were proved to be in error on it, that would certainly neither discredit Him nor the Book. It would prove no more than the falsity of the tradition which He had not been led to doubt, or as to which, if He at all doubted, He imagined He could not obtain absolute proof. It would militate no more against Him than does His mistake as to the barren fig tree; for in both cases He had presumptive evidence in His favour to begin with, evidence sufficient on this point to warrant His acceptance of the Book for further purposes. If He spoke of Moses or David, the reference must be looked on as made for the purposes of identification in regard to the passage; that is, of course, if the reference be not hypothetical merely, or based admittedly on popular opinion as an *argumentum ad hominem*. The authority of the earlier dispensation did not consist in its record being due to Moses, but in its being the earlier dispensation. The appropriateness of a psalm to His case lay not in its being uttered by David, but in its being applicable to Himself pre-eminently. The question of authorship, as I imagine, never came before Him; at least there is no evidence

that it did. If it did, He cannot have thought His views on the question to be of any moral value to us, for they have not been recorded. The question is one of literary interest, and did not in His eyes affect the history of the dispensation of God's grace. In His view, then, this Book was the essential history of the world, because it unveiled the God of the world, the God He Himself knew.

In the same way it need trouble no one if, for instance, it should ever be proved that our Saviour misnamed Zechariah son of Barachiah, who was slain "between the sanctuary and the altar."¹ It matters little whether or no Christ referred to Zechariah the son of Jehoiada,² intending to represent the line from Abel in Genesis to this man in one of the latest books of the Old Testament, but erring in His remembrance of one of the proper names at the moment of quotation, or quoting some alternative name of the man's father. It is indifferent whether He referred, if not to that Zechariah, then to Zechariah the prophet, whom our version calls the son of Berechiah (the difference in vowels is unessential), either confusing him with the former man, or having some means of identifying them, or knowing that they met the same fate. It matters nothing though He intended to refer to Zechariah the son of Baruch, slain in some such circumstances as He mentions, not very long before His own day. It is not necessary to explain the fault as that of the evangelist or a transcriber. We are not concerned to deny in our Saviour a mere lapse of memory. Weakness of mind is dependent often on physical

¹ Matt. xxiii. 35.

² 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.

infirmity ; that was as real in Him as limitation of mental faculty was when demanded by the conditions of His life. Forgetfulness of even a Bible fact, or mistake as to one, specially when it implied no consequence of spiritual import, is not more than ignorance of it to begin with, or the necessity of time in which to learn. He grew in knowledge even after He came forth, just as He had done in youth. His recorded quotations are made by memory and are not always literally accurate, even if true in their spirit.

On the other hand, we must hold steadfastly to this, that the Saviour's perception and appreciation of the truth He found in the Old Testament was unerring and perfect. His insight never failed ; whilst His results were so complete and orderly as to be not merely never at fault, but ever apt. He looked on the Book as the revelation of God, because it was the record of grace ; and His conscience had taught Him that nothing lay deeper than grace in the dealings of a loving and righteous God with men. The Bible was the record of this, the great central line of God's working ; it represented God's inmost and most characteristic, God's real, self. Christ saw Himself not only in the line, but even in the focus of it ; He found Himself not only in sympathy with all it said, but fulfilling all it longed for and pointed forward to. He accepted it, but did not need to submit Himself to it. He believed in it, yet criticised it as being Himself an authority, independent, and spiritually higher. He looked on it not as final but as instrumental. He made it a means to God, but never a substitute for Him. By it He saw the world's past ; by

it He saw the present state of God's purpose in the world; by it He saw much of the detail of His duty, personal and official; by it He saw the future indicated. By the use of it He saw God and knew man. By the aid of it He became what He was, and overcame as He did.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROUNDEDNESS OF CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE

I HAVE used this title, for want of a better, to represent the way in which Christ's knowledge, though dealing with two different spheres, regarding one of which we may say His human nature had no direct means of information, was yet fused into an organic whole by connection with His personality.

In order to see this, the first question which has to be answered is, How did Christ become conscious of Himself? or, specially, How did He come to be aware of His own Godhead? The question is not of theoretical interest only, it is of absolute importance. On it depends, as I have already hinted, the value of His own testimony as to Himself, of His teaching as a whole, and even of all His work. It is fundamental. It lies at the root of His knowledge of the epourania, as these again at that of the epigeia. Along with His original conception of good and evil, which gave Him His idea of the character of God, this is the feature essential to Him. His ideas on the epigeia demand this as well as that. Out of this twin-root they spring.

As to the explanation of His holding this view about Himself, there are two possibilities, and so two lines of

theory. The first looks on His conception of His Godhead as attained by mere human powers, possibly aided by circumstances; the second looks on it as His instinctive and original possession, because of the unity of His person.

When we examine the views of those who may best be classed in the former division, we find that they often really deal rather with Christ's becoming conscious of His Messianic vocation than with His being conscious that He was the Son of God. For many of them the latter point is put aside, because they look on the Saviour's Sonship as merely moral, that is, as the result of His singular similarity to God in respect of character. Still, their views will help us to understand the question.

Of this—the former of the two classes—there are several types, higher and lower. In Keim's view, Christ arrived at the assurance of His calling by "the development of the inner genius of His personality"; and that was due to the influence of external stimulus afforded by influences both friendly and unfriendly.

We may group Weiss and Wendt, Beyschlag and Baldensperger, as all agreeing (with variations) that the knowledge of His Messianic vocation arose in the natural spiritual character of Jesus. What confirmation was needed was supplied by outward extraordinary means—say the appearance of John the Baptist and the Baptism. Three of the four writers I have named expressly confess the weakness of any mere psychological basis to reach the result by itself. "People," Baldensperger says, "may handle the thing as they will, but it was a

matter of the purest impossibility for Christ to have arrived at the idea of His Messianicity by any, even the deepest, operation of thought." We may thus take it for granted that the weakness of Weiss' position, that our Saviour inferred His Messianicity even before Baptism from the fact of His being in spiritual character quite unlike others, has been found untenable and that the view is departed from. To supplement and strengthen the position, the appearance of the Baptist and the wonders of the Baptism are usually adduced; these are said to have determined the knowledge. Wendt argues from Christ's son-like sense of love towards the Father, to His conviction of the Father's love for Him in response; and he sees by these two events the way in which that general impression was made special, and Christ was led to believe that He was the specially favoured of God, the Messiah, the "Son of God" in an Old Testament sense. But Baldensperger, whilst not denying a certain amount of truth in the former part of this theory,—that all arose in the spiritual character of Christ,—and whilst adopting, to a certain extent at least, the latter part of it, as imparting some degree of assurance to the mind of Christ about His calling, yet thinks that a very important link has been neglected. He draws attention to the Messianic hopes of Christ's time, and thinks that a soul so spiritual cannot but have been deeply affected by these. He is of opinion that, because of the intense desire which Christ must have felt to aid in the accomplishment of them, He offered Himself to the Baptist, and was made so clear at least as to God's will in the matter, that He felt

entitled to come forth. Baldensperger considers that, spite of this, doubts were not expelled altogether from the mind of Christ, and holds that the event so little affected the range of the Saviour's Messianic conceptions that it not only permitted expansion and advance, but even radical change in the views which He held of the most fundamental points as to His kingdom. Events clarified and spiritualised these. Late in His Galilean ministry He became clear as to the necessity of His death. The necessity for that simply meant this—He had found He did not create, and saw He could not in the circumstances create, the kingdom He desired; then, as He could not believe it impossible, He looked on it as to come after (not necessarily by) His death. This led to the idea that by death He would go to heaven; and going there as one in will with God seemed to Him to imply that He had come thence and belonged there. So Baldensperger understands by the title, "Son of God," simply the Messianic vocation of the Saviour, the idea of which struck Him in the Baptism. By the title, "Son of Man," he thinks Christ represented His connection with heaven, and that He adopted it only in connection with, or because of, His coming death.

Beyschlag adopts the same starting-point in the character of Jesus, and sees in His sinlessness the sign of a sonship which, if moral and not different from that of the saints, is yet different from theirs in this, that it is original and not imparted. This he associates with some idea of supernatural connection, such as would be implied in pre-existence with God as the ideal man.

But he thinks that Christ only became conscious of His calling at, and by means of, the Baptism. Others adopt still different ideas as to the way in which the consciousness was imparted to Christ. Gess, for instance, postulates the possibility of a consciousness of His divinity in Christ from the first because He possessed its nature; but that author considers it would have remained latent except for the inheritance which, as a Jew, Jesus had out of the past, and the aid afforded in that connection by the use of the Old Testament. Whilst Lücke not only admits the latent possibility spoken of, but postulates the power of the Holy Spirit as that by which the result was elicited. Dr. Bruce, holding, of course, the divinity of our Lord, thinks that Christ became conscious of His Messianic vocation from within, not indeed by a deduction from the holiness of character which He marked in Himself, but by the Messianic charism of the Holy Spirit, and by the impulses of love and of Divine grace associated therewith, which He found rising within Him.

The other class of explanation, which seems the more natural to adopt, is that the unity of His person secured, as a natural fact in the experience of the humanity of the Son of God, a consciousness of His divinity, more or less explicit from the beginning. With this may perhaps be associated such views as those of H. Schmidt: that—as in Baldensperger's opinion—the consciousness of Sonship and of Messianic vocation went together; but that they rose some time before the Baptism and without any power except what was internal and personal to Christ Himself.

Let me state some reasons for assuming this position. Speaking generally, it seems that what may be called the external explanation is in all its forms, even the highest, quite inadequate to reach its conclusion.

One cannot even imagine that any person who was a real man, though He was not merely man but as truly God, could ever by means external to Himself have attained warrantably to the conviction that He was God, the only begotten Son of God. The insufficiency of all purely psychological data is confessed, as we have seen, by Baldensperger. On the other hand, the outer influences which are postulated must not be ordinary only but extraordinary, to secure the rise of, and warrant some such idea as that of the Messianic Sonship, or the conception, derived from the Old Testament, of Himself as the beloved and specially called of God! Whether the work of the Holy Spirit—who of course must not be identified with Christ, but however closely in union with, and constantly possessed by Him, must be regarded as a distinct person—whether His work could make any real difference in the matter, we shall come to see.

Before going into the investigation of the subject, let us notice first of all two main, or at least general thoughts, which may be helpful. The former of these two is this, that if the Son of God was conscious in His Divine nature that He had become human also, and if that knowledge was the result, not of His omniscience as God, but of the vital union which had taken place in Him between the two natures, then there seems to be no good reason for denying to Him in His humanity the corresponding consciousness of being Divine. The

latter of the two thoughts to be referred to at this stage as in some degree helpful, is one I have already hinted at—that whilst all the other facts included in the epou-
rania may be regarded as acquisitions on Christ's part, and perhaps ought so to be regarded—while such a view does no violence to His statement in the third chapter of John, that only He who had the heavenly life, and came from above, could know these things, the exclusion of this self-consciousness on His part from a position at once original and fundamental, the removing of it to a later stage, would render impossible the other ideas which found on and imply it.

Very vague is the explanation of this matter which is expressed in such phrases as "latent consciousness" or "the possibility of knowledge." The former seems to point to a knowledge which lay in the dark of unconsciousness, and required some means to lift it into light. The latter seems to point rather to a knowledge which did not originate in but came to the person. The former of these has, along with some peculiar to itself, all the difficulties attending the theory which explains this point by the union of the two natures in the one person. For the knowledge is supposed to be there, but not in consciousness. It does not need to be created, only awakened. The latter of these two theories makes the creating of this knowledge a possibility, seeing that the fact represented by it exists; but it makes the knowledge come by other causes than the fact itself.

Both theories combine in making Christ dependent for the conscious knowledge, *i.e.* really the knowledge itself, on external causes; but the one more absolutely, the

other less so. Without such aids, and without them very specially, Christ would have remained ignorant that He was God. Now, of all the means adduced for this explanation, the noblest and most natural is undoubtedly the Holy Spirit. He is allied to the Saviour most closely, and on Him, in a very peculiar sense, our Lord depended for much of the knowledge which He had even as man. Yet it is not clear how, if there was no knowledge in Christ of His own Godhead, even the Holy Spirit could by any means make the fact known to Him. To one so really human as Christ, the teaching of the Holy Spirit could have given no absolute security on such a point. We have only to remember that the Holy Spirit is so unseen in His working that a human being can know His presence only by His power, and His working by its results. A person can only be sure he is not deceiving himself by the absolute necessity of presupposing such a presence to explain something spiritual which has taken place. How then could anyone, who was real man as to His experience, even though He were God-man as to His nature, feel authorised to believe, or gain sufficient evidence to assure Him, that He might accept as true the idea which had risen in Him as to His own Godhead, backed up though that were by goodness and love, and confirmed by miracle either to or by Him? The immensity of the assumption, the slenderness and unreliability, especially of the direct evidence, and the *a priori* improbability of the thing, have all to be remembered. We know how easy it is for anyone to mistake the working of the Spirit. And even if in this Christ was not as we are, we have to

remember that we are not concerned with what in Him was moral, where we are unlike, but with what in Him was intellectual, where we resemble one another. Though He felt warranted to postulate the presence of the Spirit as the enlightener of His manhood in its conviction of moral duty even infallibly, He had no right to extend the conviction, and gives no sign that He thought He had. He had no reason—according to this argument—except the suggestions of outside sources, to apply the explanation to this matter, so as to raise the idea to a higher level than mere imagination, or suppose it anything else than a case in which the wish has been father to the thought.

This leads me on, of course, to consider the occasions which the Holy Spirit is said to have used as means for creating this conviction in our Lord. These are sometimes represented as being the contemplation of His own character, or the fact of His sinlessness, or miraculous occurrences which connected themselves with Him. Baldensperger admits psychological inference to be insufficient for reaching the result. Study by the Saviour of His own character, consciousness of His own love or sinlessness, could not have warranted it. More was needed even for the knowledge of Messianic calling, and of the special Divine favour which was reckoned to be associated with it. Baldensperger lays the basis of the process in the psychological consciousness of the lad, but thinks the Baptism with its great miracle was needed to reach the conclusion. Naturally, the question depends on what we consider to be the conclusion—whether mere Messianic calling or Divine Sonship. We need have little

hesitancy in admitting the effect of the Baptism to be sufficient for the former, even if we deny it to be sufficient for the latter.

It appears that the more we examine the matter the more it seems as if Jesus had not attained to the belief in His own Godhead by a mere process of deduction from facts the very greatest—as, for instance, the Baptism. Naturally, the Baptism and its attendant miracle produced impression; but the impression, even if it were that of transcendent privilege in a general way, could not have become that of Godhead definitely without the aid of some intellectual process. Whilst, however, the former seems not only legitimate but real, the latter seems to be unlikely and unauthorised. Even if the words “Thou art My beloved Son” conveyed information of a special kind, the information must have been meant for someone other than the Saviour; for He was able to use the same idea when twelve years old. The Baptism was, as Baldensperger points out, very important, so far as its influence on Christ's consciousness was concerned—especially the second part of it, the testimony. That author is right in emphasising the impression it produced, whether he be right or wrong in asserting that only Christ's world of feeling, and not His range of Messianic views or landmarks was affected. And he is right in setting it at the beginning of the first part, as the Transfiguration at that of the second part of Christ's ministry. Again he is right in saying that the voices from heaven have always direct reference to the person, and only indirect bearing on the thing; just as Dr. Bruce speaks in regard to both the Baptism and the Transfiguration,

as assuring Christ of what He had thought about Himself, *i.e.* confirming belief by impression. It does not seem, then, as if either of the two events was meant, for neither of them was fitted, to communicate spiritual knowledge to Christ. They seem to have been in the circumstances much more fitted to impart, what He needed far more than that—namely, those impressions which are transformed in the human heart into spiritual strength. They were to Him what a sacrament is to us. The one event was as useless to Christ for attaining the knowledge of His mission, as the other for disclosing His fast-approaching death. In both cases He was aware clearly of these facts at an earlier date. Shortly before the latter of them He had taken His death home to Himself in public. In the former He by no means obscurely hinted at consciousness of His mission in coming to be baptized; nay, He stated plainly the conviction He entertained of His Divine calling, and, as I think, stated even more than that, by the resoluteness, even the authority, with which He opposed the will of the authorised prophet of the age, who had recognised Him—saying to John, “Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” In overcoming John’s scruples He showed, I imagine, both what He thought of Himself and of His calling.

But we may take the second of these instances in illustration of the first. For whilst the Transfiguration, with its testimony so like that of the Baptism, was given, just as the Baptism was, in answer to prayer, or at least whilst the Saviour prayed, the prayer offered can scarcely have been for information, especially such

information as was contained in the message which came as answer from heaven, for it was nothing more than that of the Baptism, though accompanied by the fellowship of two men. Now, even if the lad of twelve had not understood His own words, it is not denied that the man of thirty saw clearly what those spoken at His baptism implied. The repetition of them must have had another object than the imparting of knowledge merely. If the object was impression and strength rather than knowledge and guidance, then all becomes clear. Now it is more likely that the same testimony should have served the same end twice, when confessedly that was what the circumstances demanded, than that it should have been suited for and served two different ends on different occasions—knowledge at the Baptism and impression at the Transfiguration. On no other theory, too, can the sending of Moses and Elias be understood. No one can imagine that these saints, just because they were in glory, could tell the Son of God what He did not know, or what He could not have received by more natural and equally efficient means. They came because their sympathy was needed, and because in them as escaping, or practically escaping, death, there was a foretaste of the result of His own work. The Transfiguration was meant to steady and support the Saviour's human frailty in the reaction which naturally overtook Him after He had openly undertaken what we have every reason to believe was the most trying part of His work, when He not only felt Himself committed to dying, but was aware He was entering into the shadow of His death.

In this light, then, the Baptism also must be viewed. It conveyed impression rather than knowledge. What it meant becomes clear by means of the Temptation. These two events are connected, as anyone can see by noticing that the one is treated as the outcome of the other. Now when Satan said, "If Thou be the Son of God,"—whether that in his lips, and to Christ's mind, implied divinity or merely Messianic calling—he did not intend to insinuate any doubt of the matter into the Saviour's mind, but to get the Saviour, on that pretext and in that faith, to act along wrong lines. He meant, by the admission he made, to obscure the wrongness of his alluring suggestion, to blind the Saviour as to the right way of carrying out His calling, and to cause it thereby to fail. For in baptism the Saviour undertook all that was needed for the salvation of guilty men. Death was included; though whether He saw that or not at the time makes no difference, so far as the present purpose is concerned. He gave Himself up to it, whatever it implied. The question was, when it led to personal suffering, was He prepared to adhere to it, to accept that? The temptation was to seek the glory by an easier way than God's, to break off from His helpless Messianic position, using His power rather for Himself than for men, for Himself in preference to them. The devil's temptations were concerned altogether with trying to draw the Saviour off the line of action which His whole-hearted submission to God and acceptance of His lot with its duties involved. They tested not His knowledge, but rather His fitness and preparation spiritually, as the person whom God had called

to serve. What was brought out was indirectly His clear view of the principle He must act by in His new position, and directly His loyalty to it. The Temptation showed the impression which the Baptism had produced. The result of it was seen in Christ's spiritual strength. The baptism with the Spirit came as the reward of submitting to baptism with water. The one was the consecration, which followed the other, the dedication. That which came second expressed to the Saviour the approbation of His Father on that which first He had done in faith, indicating the acceptance of His person with all His service. It pledged God to aid Him with all that His weak humanity needed to carry through the work. The Temptation only showed how real the Baptism was and how suitably the Baptism, as the preparation of Him who had devoted Himself, had prefaced the great work.

It seems impossible, then, to accept the conclusion that any outer occurrence, even miraculous like the Baptism, in spite of all it meant and brought to Christ, could have conveyed information as to Divine Sonship—especially if He was quite ignorant of that—or could have given Him such information as implied assurance on the point. The mere descent of a dove—or anything like it—supposing it to have been symbolical, even definitely and recognisedly symbolical, could have given no help in illustrating a phrase so generally used in a vague sense as was that one, "Son of God." In fact, to think that the Saviour leaped into an assurance of His Godhead by some ecstatic, unintelligent process in connection with a momentary

state of religious feeling, is as absurd as to imagine He reached it by some method of mere intellectual deduction from concurrent signs: it is to start in the line which ends in Beyschlag's habit of explaining away the assumption of real divinity as nothing better than imagination, though the pious imagination of a very good person, who was in some way, which cannot be made intelligible, Divine.

After what has been said, there is hardly any need to refer to the idea that Christ came to know Himself by thinking on Himself as He developed. His extraordinary gifts, if they impressed Him, certainly could not have warranted Him in believing in His own Godhead (Strauss); nor could His inner genius (Keim), any more than His religious relation to the Father (Wendt).

At twelve years old His statement as to Himself is sufficiently definite. It is more than generic or ethical. Strauss confesses that the passage demands a larger meaning. He says, "One might be inclined to understand the designation of τοῦ πατρὸς generally as implying that God was the Father of all men, and only in this sense the Father of Jesus. But this interpretation is forbidden not only by the addition of the pronoun μου—the above sense requiring ἡμῶν (as in Matt. vi. 9), but still more absolutely by the circumstance that the parents of Jesus did not understand these words—a decided indication that they must have had a special meaning, which can here be no other than the mystery of the Messiahship of Jesus, who as Messiah was υἱὸς Θεοῦ in a peculiar sense." And if one feels forced, as I think one is, to put emphasis on the *My* Father of Christ's, in

contrast to the *Thy* Father of His mother's words, we cannot help inferring, as was noted in a previous chapter, that Christ, who had been left in darkness as to His real origin, then revealed His knowledge of it, and astonished them, as much as afterwards He astonished the Jews, who showed what they understood Him to mean by the words, when they said He made God His own (*ἰδιον*) Father; says John the evangelist,¹ "making Himself equal with God." As confirmatory evidence, I might adduce the admission made by Keim "that there frequently occurs in Christ's mouth, whilst in Galilee, the exclusive appropriation of God as His Father, whereby He immediately declares Himself to be the Son. . . . He uses it of Himself alone, where it might be easily used of others." Now this unique relation is one, the knowledge of which could never have been reached by any speciality of His own love. No doubt His love was very special; but it was not more true, though it was more perfect than that, say, of His own mother, or Simeon, or Anna, or Elisabeth. It could never warrant Him in speaking of pre-existence, or calling Himself the only begotten Son.

Just as little could the conviction, or, if it may be so called, the consciousness of His own sinlessness, give any effective warrant for the belief in His own Godhead. With Schmidt I am inclined to lay special stress on the fact that Christ's Messianic calling could not possibly be known to Him as a deduction from His peculiar spiritual condition, but came to Him in immediate connection with the consciousness He had of His own being. If Christ's knowledge of His own sinlessness depended on

¹ John v. 18.

His experience, it may have been a belief even rising to a conviction, but even that conviction was by no means sufficient to warrant Him in believing He was the Son of God. The facts of sinlessness may have borne a large part of the proof for others, but they could never be adequate for Himself. For no amount of fancied, or, as people say, conscious sinlessness—that is, unconsciousness of sin—can warrant the inference that there is no sin. Many who are evidently enough sinful are quite unconscious of it, and even will not be convinced of it. And though that was not the case with the Saviour, still no mere experience of sinlessness in the past, because of conscious and continuing love of God, could ever warrant the inference that sin was impossible to any extent in the future, and then that such sinlessness implied divinity. However, our Saviour claimed not merely that He knew of no sin on His own part, but that He knew He had never sinned. He expressly asked,¹ “Which of you convicteth Me of sin?” and sin cannot, with any straightforwardness, be there taken to mean only error in teaching, as Wendt suggests. Nay, more: He speaks as if a certain line—sinlessness—were the only one possible to Him; but He speaks of His assurance in regard to that as rising not out of His experience of the past, which had been always hitherto sinless, but out of the knowledge of His person as Divine and not only human. Evidently He rests on the ethical unity of His person when, in such passages as those following, He states that for Him He is sure sin is impossible: “I can of Myself do nothing”; “Ye shall

¹ John viii. 46.

know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as the Father taught Me, I speak these things.”¹ So when He says,² “As I hear, I judge,” He adds, “and My judgment is righteous; because” (not I hear, for they could not understand that, but because) “I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” Similarly, He says,³ “All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me,” and then, in vindication of the position He was thus placed in, and to show His hearty appreciation of the purpose of the God of grace, adds, “and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out,” with the following explanation: “For I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me,” which is interpreted by His own words in the next verse: “This is the will of Him that sent Me, that of all that which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day: for this is the will of My Father, that everyone that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

As confirmatory of all this, we notice that, whilst Christ looks on repentance as the emphatic and immediate duty of everyone, he not only ignores but expressly repudiates the necessity of it for Himself. He was more than unconscious of sin; He was conscious He had never sinned, and that He had a special power by which His purity was guaranteed. Mere unconsciousness of sin would have meant presumption and weakness, whilst the knowledge of His Godhead enabled

¹ John v. 30, viii. 28.

² John v. 30.

³ John vi. 37-40.

Him to know He could not have sinned, and to assert without pride that He had not.

What but this same reason enabled Christ to speak as He did of His own positive perfection of life? "I know Him,"¹ He says, and so could add, "I keep His word." No mere experience, even of perfectness, and assurance that He pleased God, could without this have enabled Him to say, "The prince of the world cometh, and he hath nothing in Me,"² or "I have overcome the world."³ For Christ to have made assertions like these, without anything as their ground but experience,—though an experience the most remarkable and pure,—would have been to speak of a likelihood only more or less probable, and would have showed on His part, even if it were warranted by the result, an ambition, not to say a presumption quite separate from the mind which was in Him who thought equality with God no object of ambition, not a thing to be snatched at but to be bestowed and held because of worth. To quote Dr. Bruce, "I said that no explanation of the Christ-consciousness of Jesus could be accepted which did not respect His humility. For this reason I hesitated to regard the sense of sinlessness as the origin of that consciousness, and preferred to find it in the Messianic charism of love." If that be true of the attainment of the knowledge of His vocation, how much more so of the knowledge regarding His person.

We are now in a position to see how, on the other hand, Christ's claim of sinlessness was bound to carry weight with others as the proof of His divinity. They

¹ John viii. 55.

² John xiv. 30.

³ John xvi. 33.

saw no sin in Him; they heard a good man, backed up by the testimony of the Old Testament, of John the Baptist, of miracles, and of words of grace which appealed to the conscience—they heard Him claim, not only unconsciousness of sin, such as they could well believe, but sinlessness, which they could not have imagined. They were not entitled to disbelieve Him, when everything pointed to the truth of His assertion; and they could only explain it as He did, by accepting His statement of the way by which He had arrived at the belief, namely, that of His real and conscious Godhead. As Dr. Bruce has said, "The inference from the spotless life to the Messianic vocation is just, but it seems one more appropriate for us to draw than for Jesus."

It is immaterial, comparatively, as to when this knowledge came to Him, if only we accept the fact that it came by the internal constitution of His person, and not by any gift external to it. If it came according to the internal constitution of His person, it came, one must believe, according to the possibilities of a human soul and its consciousness; early therefore, and perhaps gradually, at least as regards clearness of content or fulness of meaning. Certainly no one can imagine that first of all Christ's consciousness was prophetic only, and then, say by the Baptism, Messianic.

If anyone should now ask me how Christ became conscious of Godhead, I answer that the question is not fair. For a merely human person to conceive how it was is as impossible as for a lower animal to imagine the way in which a man recognises his humanity. What warrants the possibility of that which I have written in this chapter

is just the fact that it does not deal with how the recognition took place, but rather occupies itself with the impossibility of the thing from mere human effort, and deals with the results which flowed from it as a fact.

I cannot see that any amount of external evidence given to one who, though God-man, was yet truly man in all His faculties, could enable Him to arrive at the knowledge of His Godhead. I cannot see how, with a true personal assumption of human nature, He could lack this knowledge as soon as it was possible to Him. I cannot see how without it He could draw that distinction between *epourania* and *epigeia* in respect of their accessibility to men, which John sets before us in the third chapter of his Gospel, and otherwise I can find no explanation of Christ's conscious sinlessness, or of His claim to perpetual intercourse with and pleasing of the Father.


Let us begin now by acknowledging that Christ's acquaintance with the *epourania* was miraculous; whatever these included, they were the most extraordinary thing connected with Him, and were His most treasured possession. In all else He may have been like us; in these He was peculiar and divine. From them flowed all that is unique in His life; and they in turn all proceeded out of the miracle of His own self-consciousness, the knowledge He had that He was the Son of God. That could have been given in no other way than as a direct result—the direct result of the Incarnation. As a person, He could not lack it. The knowledge that He was God was as natural in His human mind, as in ours

is the knowledge that we are men. It was His because He was what He was.

What the intellectual contents of the *epourania* were, we shall have occasion immediately to see. They depended at anyrate on this great fundamental position of which I have been speaking. But we must not forget that the *epourania* were not intellectual only. In the endowment of our Saviour's nature there was more than the self-consciousness of His Godhead; there was, accompanying that, an original trend of His whole nature in harmony with this, its great and original feature. In it, or as part of its result, one sees tendency of will, aims, tastes, desires—all equally unique. He says of His own will: "I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." His argument as to the difference between Himself and the unbelieving Jews in the eighth chapter of John's Gospel, proceeds on the assumption that His tastes and tendencies are different from those of ordinary or sinful men. Now this great nebulous mass of impulses must get the very highest place in determining the action and life-work of Christ. Its importance is only second to His consciousness of the great fundamental fact of His existence as God and not man only.

The actual amount which should be included in the *epourania* is of secondary importance. They, as things referring to the heavenly life and known only to one who was filled with it, are things inaccessible to men. Yet it does not follow that even Christ's knowledge of them all was immediate and original, like that of His own Godhead. Of it He could not fail; it was the

direct result of His person. The other facts He may have reached, probably did reach, gradually. Some of them are composite; yet, even if they came later, and at different times, they were still epourania, not only because they referred to the otherwise unknown heavenly sphere of life, but because they were reached by Him in virtue of the knowledge He had of His own personality. They may have all been gained by inference; and if that were possible, it is not legitimate for us to postulate any higher method of attainment. Yet, even if reached thus, they remain the revelation of one who knew them because He was at once Divine and holy. If one includes in the epourania, as John seems to do, at least these three great points—the love of God, the atonement of the Son, and the coming judgment, one has three great central positions which will illustrate sufficiently what is meant. The love of the Father might very well be reached by means of the standard put in the Saviour's perfect conscience. If the latter had a clear idea of and absolute devotion to the distinction between right and wrong, then the God it could worship it must be able to respect; God must embody its standard and realise its ideal, must live and love that. The God of righteousness and love was thus clear to Christ. From that there was but a step to the conception of the God of grace. He who was sure God was the God of love had no difficulty in finding the explanation of His own presence among sinful men, specially when all the feelings of His nature prompted Him to undertake that to which His intelligence directed Him. The idea of a judgment was doubtless begotten by His conscience, but the putting of Himself as Saviour into connection with



it, as test and judge, is only the natural consequence of the view He took of Himself as intended to carry out the Father's desire. If our Saviour used the Old Testament to confirm His beliefs, and to fill up detail of facts relating to the epourania, is it absurd to suppose that these points I have been touching on were reached as I have indicated? Of course I do not wish to dogmatise on such a point, for it is not essential to my argument. The result of the admission of it is just this, that, except for the perfection of His holy human nature, our Saviour differed in knowledge from us, whom He had to save, only in the consciousness He had of His own divinity. And that, so far from giving Him advantage in doing what He was called to do, only burdened Him with the tremendous sense of responsibility implied in the fact, that what He was doing He was doing for our salvation.

Thus we see that, when our Saviour speaks of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, of the Father's love, of His coming to do the Father's will, of His having been anointed and sent of God, or of His having been (or being) in the bosom of the Father, He speaks not by remembrance, or by direct knowledge, but by an assurance equally clear to His faith, and as firm, though arrived at by human and indirect ways. The knowledge He had as to Himself was the one supernatural endowment separating Him from all around.

On the other hand, it is important for us to be clear that this knowledge of His own person, which was not a mere reminiscence of the past, should be regarded as a direct consciousness of the present. It was not the

remembrance of a thing once revealed, or the adherence to a conviction once reached, but a present communication. It was not remembrance or belief, but direct consciousness. It was the result, the immediate influence of His Divine personality in the human nature which had been taken.

As to the religious emotions and promptings accordant with His divinity, which I have already spoken of as finding their place in His human nature, if we believe that the second person of the Trinity submitted to be enlightened, and strengthened, and guided by the Holy Ghost, we must also infer that these dispositions, found in His helpless human nature, were communicated not by His own Divine self-assertion, but by the third person of the Trinity; because human nature is, by its weakness and peculiar receptivity, fitted for, and has need of, the Holy Spirit. The result He wrought in Christ's emotional and moral nature was not unnatural and unintelligible, but without violation of the limits of humanity, and through the agency of Christ's knowledge of right and wrong and of His divinity. Thus it was that this emotional life, which was fitted to accompany and develop the consciousness and the range of the epourania round which it circled, was given, and had to be preserved by the Holy Spirit. Of course without care it could not be preserved. It needed to be esteemed and treated as a responsible gift.

Acceptance of and obedience to such impulses implied loyalty of heart to the epourania and so to God; they involved the fulfilment of God's will, and the gaining of His approbation. The epourania needed, as they became

clear, to be accepted as final by the Saviour's conscience, and to be enthroned as the ruling principles of His life—to be obeyed at all costs.

Nay, as the epourania looked upward first of all, Christ needed to accept them as all that was necessary for Him in His humanity meantime to know of heaven. He needed humbly to believe that what was withheld was inappropriate, and would have been cumbersome or disordering. But as whatever suited Him and was true for Him was true for all men, as He and they were under the same God, nay, because what was given not only suited Him as human and them as men, but came home to Him in His humanity, it was just what they needed too, and what they might receive in the same way as He had done. And the possession of it by Himself as His great blessing, the possession of it by Him alone as His peculiar treasure, implied the obligation to make it clear to men, because it was their great need. The knowledge of the epourania was more to Him than the revelation of the unseen world or the standard of His own life; it was the gift to be handed on to men, as that intended for them by God.

This was what the Saviour needed to see and to keep continually before Him; and that depended on the loyalty of His will in receiving and obeying the enlightenment or impulse of the Holy Spirit. For that He needed faith. Only by faith could He regard the epourania as a sufficient revelation of God, and of that higher sphere where God was, which, however He might be related to it, did not fall within the limits of His human consciousness. Only by faith could He set up the

epourania as the standard of all truth and the rule for all duty. He needed faith and faith always, if He were to be true to Himself and to God; if He were to resist everything hostile to, or inconsistent with, His treasure of first principles. He needed either to act by its instincts or to refer consciously to its dictates. But, as is evident, the point at which His faith found root was that of His own self-conscious Godhead, authenticating the decision of His natural conscience about good and evil; and the means by which His faith was upheld, or loyalty to Himself and to God preserved, was the constant presence of the gracious Holy Spirit. By His faith, then, He recognised God, and filled both the world above and around, without as well as within Himself, with that glorious presence.

Hence arises both the possibility of temptation and the possibility of victory. The difficulty occasioned by such texts as "What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour:"¹ and "If it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt,"² is clear on their surface. One cannot help asking oneself, how was it possible for Him, with all His knowledge of the epourania, to forget, one might almost say, His Godhead? I think, however, we find help upon this point, if we keep in view the great principle that this knowledge in Him was not a memory, but an immediate communication; not brought out of a heavenly past, but received by listening in the earthly present. Thus the knowledge could be more or less

¹ John xii. 27.

² Matt. xxvi. 39.

clear as He fixed His attention on it, or as it was obscured for the time by other things which intruded. This seems, in fact, to have been the case on these occasions. The temptation was to separate between the *epourania*, which were God's will or Christ's standard, and His nature with its desires, as that which should, by the Holy Spirit, be always subject and conformed thereto. The possibility of temporary unconsciousness in regard to the *epourania* arises out of the fact that the knowledge of them, however early it came, came gradually and increasingly. Under attention and thought they came to stand out clearly before Him, and to reveal all that was in their heart. He knew them, but (just as in the case of the rest of the information He possessed), remembered them as His attention was directed to them. In fact, Mark's description of the agony in the garden, which states that the Saviour was "amazed,"¹ seems to imply the intrusion of something on which surprise concentrated all His powers, and which shut out, for the moment, every other consideration. In neither case was the separation of His nature from the supremacy of the *epourania* tolerated by Him for a moment. The prayer, "if it be possible," was the prayer of right instinct, though also of a weak and surprised humanity. The admission, "not as I will, but as Thou wilt," was the prayer of the balanced and self-conscious self, which had conquered the surprise. The impulse of the temptation made Him swing as a pendulum does, but in that very moment conscience asserted itself, and its supremacy

¹ Mark xiv. 33.

was acknowledged by faith. The deliberate decision was in favour of the epourania, cost what that might. Faith gave the epourania power over the natural and sinless instincts of humanity, and the spirit was able to lead the weak flesh in the path of duty. Of course I do not forget that these passages speak of the epourania which were acquired and not original in His knowledge, especially of the need of His death for men. It is easy to see how He could be unconscious of that for a moment; but it is important to see that there is only an implied forgetfulness of His Godhead in the forgetfulness of His purpose on earth. Still, if that was clear to Himself, and its implications were known only step by step, as His human nature could grasp what was conveyed, there is little difficulty in seeing that even here, for the time, the intrusive element hid, if not the fact itself, yet that in the fact which gave it pre-eminence and weight.

The two sayings have this value also, in that they show how very natural and real was the experience of Him who knew Himself to be God, how that knowledge never saved Him from aught, how very little it helped, and how heavily it burdened Him.

We thus arrive at the conclusion that the knowledge of the epourania and of the epigeia was fused into a homogeneous mass in the person of Christ by faith. Faith represented the supremacy of conscience, or of God's will. The value of the Saviour's life depended on the maintenance of that unity. He had to live a life of faith. The keystone of His life is His faith.

We can go on now to see Christ's world, and how

it looked in His eyes. The Saviour had to do with a universe which presented itself to Him as having two halves. But in both He saw the same God—the God of grace, who had sent Him, and whom, with all His soul, He felt worthy of all His worship. The epigeia, as we saw, became, as well as the epourania, the guarantee of God to Him. The latter suited His nature, otherwise poor and dark; they formed the standard of, and supplied the impulses needed in it. The former was just the application of the other to all the new developing circumstances of life. Heavenly and earthly things alike enshrined and revealed, and were controlled by, the God of grace.

Christ's view thus reflects His own personality. He could not separate the God of the epourania from the God of the epigeia, the God of grace from the God of providence. Nay, in the two spheres, the same God acted, He saw, by the same principles. As that God was known in the one, so He could be calculated on to act in the other. Earthly affairs were fresh illustrations of the truth of the epourania. Anything proved the beginning of an avenue which led up to God. The sower, the mote and the beam, ravening wolves and timid sheep, salt and light, pearls and swine, leaven and mustard seed, each became a starting-point which ended with God; for He was the centre of the universe, and it could not be even thought of apart from Him. God faced Christ everywhere; a broad or a narrow way, fishers at work, straining at a gnat, the needle's eye, the camel, wine skins and their patches—anything in all the world pointed up

to God when this world was only the entrance hall of the other.

We can see now that the rest of Christ's knowledge, like that which He set Himself to gain from the Old Testament, was a knowledge of principles rather than of details, and one which could give suitable place to facts, otherwise seemingly isolated. Christ ranged worldly things, whatever other aspects they might have, according as they affected His work. His knowledge was no loose, rolling, unformed set of ideas, but a connected whole, a filled-up system, which represented Himself, and bore the stamp of His own personality. The variety observed in His teaching is, as in the case of nature, produced by the application of a few general principles—mercy, holiness, love, righteousness, justice, faithfulness. These He used according to the instincts of His Spirit-filled nature, and the standard of the epourania in His conscience. He applied them fearlessly, sure of the result. For Him they were not separate entities, to be balanced by a deliberate judgment, but a unity, seen balanced in the God of grace, with whom He felt Himself at one. They were the elaborations of perfect love, and expressed fully His own feelings. He calculated on them not less surely than on physical laws. He was convinced that not one jot or tittle of the law could pass till it was fulfilled; for it was God's, and part of His grace. The man who taught another to break one of the least of these commandments was least in the kingdom of God, seeing that he had a very imperfect knowledge of this fundamental view of Him who was its head.

As this knowledge was the teaching of His conscience, which He knew to be absolute, and the experience of His heart, it was to Christ authoritative. We saw already that it superseded what even Moses had taught. By it He vindicated healing on the Sabbath day; by it He condemned divorce; and by it He represented God's views—"a man better than a sheep," or "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice."

Thus Jesus was different from all around by the peculiar set of ideas which filled Him. John the Baptist was distinct from Him just as Pilate, or Herod, or any of the Pharisees was. His nature and tastes and views, His aims and standards and ways were of heaven, whilst theirs were only of the earth. He never regarded petty conventionalities, just as He never showed worldliness of taste; He never used strained literalisms, just as He never felt sensuality of desire. He always saw principles which enshrined God. These kept His heart.

This explains to us, also, how Christ seemed to see things with two separate eyes; to have His eyes fixed on both hemispheres of His universe at once; to understand their mutual relations as they lay alongside one another, bathed in the same light; to think of things with a double-lobed brain. He seemed to stand with a foot in each world, so that men saw quite differently what appeared only natural to Him. They felt that His feet were on the earth, but that His head pierced the clouds. They felt themselves outdistanced by His ideas, even when they saw into them. The more they saw into them, the less they felt they had exhausted them or

comprehended Him. Though He hated death because of its connection with sin, and even feared it, yet He saw it was in a very real way for Him just a going home to His Father, and to others a mere falling asleep. So He illustrated the spiritual resurrection of the soul by the final one of the body, and compared His own death to the sowing of a grain of wheat. To Him life was a day, and for men death was a night. He was constantly using words with what seems extraordinary subtlety, yet in a way which is the natural outcome of His way of looking at things: the words temple, born, lifted up, water, thirst, eat, harvest, meat, bread, father, good, sleep, wash, world, are all employed thus.

In the same manner we find Christ able to create parallelisms between the principles of the two hemispheres—the epourania and the epigeia—to see them in line, and apply the one to the explanation of the other. We shall see this more fully yet; but meantime we may take a few cases appropriate to His view of Himself. For instance, we see the ear that is Godward and the mouth that is manward in the expression “As I hear I judge.”¹ That remarkable saying, or rather twin-saying,² “All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me: and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out,” is explained by the faith which recognised in the epourania a revelation to be trusted fully, and yet did not forget the obligation to act by it. The words, “No man can come unto Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him,”³ indicate a deep sense of present helplessness; yet the words

¹ John v. 30.² John vi. 37.³ John vi. 44.

which follow, "And I will raise him up in the last day," are, in this view of them, quite natural, though they breathe the utmost assurance as to the future. In the same way we come by Christ's own words to understand the place which He believed Himself to hold in the process of salvation. He compares it with that of the Father thus: "As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself."¹ He represents Himself as to us the object of faith, in the same way that the Father is to Him, if we would live a right life; He says,² "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me." He represents the knowledge He has of the Father—that which lay embedded in the epourania and formed the basis of His faith—as corresponding exactly with the knowledge we must have of Himself; He says,³ "I am the Good Shepherd, and I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father." We must take the way to Him that He took toward the Father, if we would abide in His love; He says,⁴ "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." Then He and His people are to stand toward the Father on one footing: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world";⁵ they are fit to act as He Himself did in the Father's name by faith: "As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I

¹ John v. 26.² John vi. 57.³ John x. 14.⁴ John xv. 10.⁵ John xvii. 16.

them into the world;"¹ and they have power to act even more effectively: "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father."² The outcome of the whole is their perfect union with Him, like His with God: "I pray that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be in us. . . . And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, as we are one: I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one."³

May we not say now, however, that if Christ's teaching bore in its peculiar views the stamp of His personality, it no less reveals its identity by the form in which it is expressed? For anyone to think that he has explained its shape by the supposition that Jesus had a poetical mind, is to show a poor insight into the Saviour's being, and small appreciation of what He taught. Poetical He was, but He was poetical because of His far-reaching views and the truth of His opinions, the completeness and roundedness of His ideas, and the appreciation He had of the details of life, through seeing these in connection with its great principles, and as illustrations of its great problems. He was certainly no mere poet, however truly He was a poet. He was religious man and philosopher, practical reformer and Saviour as well. The illustrations He used were natural to Him; they were simply the result of the way in which He saw things. They came from knowledge, not fancy; they were revelations even more than illustrations; they were

¹ John xvii. 18.² John xiv. 12.³ John xvii. 21-23.

woven into the web, not embroidered on the surface; they embodied real truth and set forth principles; they were not created for the occasion, or intended to serve a momentary purpose; they have permanent validity, and so teach even to this day; they embodied not His view simply, but abiding fact. His illustrations were not imported into His teaching artificially from without, like Chinese lanterns hung all over a Christmas tree. Matter and form came from the same source; the one fits the other, as the skin does the flesh. By that fact men not only saw things as He did, but came to see them by the same way.

That, again, made Him the teacher He was. He was able to speak freshly on metaphysical points, and make subtleties simple. Moral distinctions became as clear as concrete illustrations or living word-pictures. He did not begin to use illustrations for the first time when He judged it expedient to begin to speak in parables.¹ He thought through them, for He saw by them. When the disciples said, "Now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb,"² they simply showed how unlike they were to Him. What made all clear to Him, in whom were the epourania, left them still dark. When He said, "The hour cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall tell you plainly of the Father,"³ He meant that they should not always see in the partial and fragmentary way, in which His full-orbed spiritual knowledge had been gained, slowly and as from beneath,

¹ Liddell and Scott point out that the Fourth Gospel uses *παροιμία* (a proverb) in the same sense as the synoptists employ *παραβολή* (a parable).

² John xvi. 29.

³ John xvi. 25.

but as He Himself could now see, with perfect vision, and with the assurance that all centred in the Father. Men were in fact prosaic, because incomplete in knowledge, and unattractive for the want of a heart with distinctive personality. Christ's views were fresh and suggestive, revealed great principles, and ran along main lines of thought, any one of which led up to God.

But now I go on to point out that Christ's knowledge was not only a complete thing, a system, but a living system, moving easily with Himself, fitting His grasp for use, because it was part of Himself and part of His own experience. Christ was never at fault; He never erred, He never hesitated, not even in difficult situations, where two great moral principles presented opposing claims and seemed to clash. He answered the comment of Judas on Mary's prodigality as readily as the devil's quotations at the Temptation. Observance of the Sabbath, divorce, and the relations of the sexes after death, presented no difficulties to Him.

He judged men, too, unhesitatingly, just as He gauged their arguments. He felt the spirit of the men as easily as He saw the outcome of their opinions. He perceived when Satan spoke by Peter, and how the Pharisees had simply put themselves in His hand when they pleaded that, if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would not have been partakers with them in the evil that was done. He could judge and expose the quibbles as to Corban, oaths, and suchlike, as well as see the cumulative power of guilt throughout the successive generations of the people. He was able to

judge questioners by the ring of their words, true or false. He saw whether statements lay along the lines of truth, or fell athwart and obscured their vistas; whether they pointed steadily to God or wandered aimlessly. Nicodemus He answered; the man born blind in Jerusalem He sought out and revealed Himself to; the rich young man was, He felt, kept back by riches, hence He demanded the sacrifice of them; to those who were trying Him in the end He answered nothing, for He saw their wrongdoing was conscious.

You see now that Jesus had only to follow out that which thus presented itself to Him in its own way, to be loyal to Himself and to His circumstances, as the expression of God's will. That meant doing right, moving forward with perfect balance yet with absolute freedom. By observing it He called men to Him or sent them away, ever aptly. He observed circumstances, it is true; His life would have been absurd else; but always His judgment rested on principle. Though His judgment about men and things was limited in its range and natural in its methods, still it was so gathered round the central and original position which dominated it all, it was so clear in its lines and orderly and rounded in its details, that in no circumstance was He at fault either as to Himself or as to others. He hid Himself, or travelled, or gave Himself up to death; He reproved, or encouraged, or absolved, always with an appreciation of the position most unerring and clear, because He was true to Himself.

As I have already said, Christ's conception of the epourania, and His personal loyalty to them, rendered it imperative that He should impose them on all others likewise.

It is very interesting to observe that Christ expressly says His knowledge of the importance of the epourania forced Him to preach them. Consequently, as Keim and Baldensperger both observe, the Saviour undertook His public ministry not of His own initiative, but under severe inner compulsion. The Saviour's testimony in the matter was, "I spake not from Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak."¹ He pointed to them as forming the basis of His own judgments: "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you: howbeit He that sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto the world."² They formed, He said, His gift, and were the privilege of those who received them. "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known unto you."³

The constant and first care of Christ was to keep clear the avenues between Himself and God, to preserve the right relation to God, by which the revelation of the Divine perfectness was clear. His next aim was always to get men to look up these, and see God as He did; to see the epourania as expressive of God, and the epigeia as unlocked and glorious because of them. He felt that His mission, His duty, was to be the revealer of God. For that end the epourania were His treasure

¹ John xii. 49.² John viii. 26.³ John xv. 15.

and His trust. He was always looking for or trying to create faith in them, that is, in the God whose heart they represented; the presence of faith gave Him a free hand and rendered Him effective; the absence of it rendered His presence useless and His will powerless. No one can fail to see how the centurion of Capernaum or the Syro-Phœnician woman gladdened Him, and how the people at Nazareth grieved Him. He encouraged the people, when things seemed to contradict this faith; for He knew they might sooner rely on the unchangeableness of God than on the things that seemed to hide Him, or that distorted what was seen of Him. "Pray," He says, "for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."¹ "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."² When the leper in the beginning of the Saviour's ministry cried out, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,"³ he got a very different answer from that given at a later period to the man who brought his demon-possessed son to be healed; yet both were answered suitably, with a view to creating in them right faith. To men without faith His life was an enigma, His spirit unintelligible; His views were a mere chaos of words, His miracles mere wonders, appealing to the senses without rousing spiritual appreciation. For this reason He refrained from merely healing as many people as possible. His cures, or His refusals to cure, were intended equally to be the occasion of seeking for God. Better that many should remain unhealed, if perchance in their distress they might yet be made to cry to God, than that a great

¹ Matt. vi. 32.² Matt. vi. 33.³ Mark i. 40.

host of healed men, full of boisterous energy and possessed by absurd, earthly, enthusiastic ideas as to Him, ignorant of God and unchanged in heart, should fill the country.

To His disciples He looked for faith; it was the test that they were in their right place near Him, qualified to benefit by their advantages. For else they could not see God come near in Him—His God of grace, the God of the epourania; and they could not have been able to fulfil the conditions required of those He thus kept near Him—"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." The training His disciples got in the warm atmosphere which surrounded His person was just the acquisition of His habit of ranging by faith all ideas along the lines that led fitly up to God. God was unknown, and the world narrowed, confused, anarchical, for the want of that way of seeing all. The lack was vital, and it was for Him to remedy it. As He Himself said in the end, He had come to bear witness to this. In view of it, He could say with assurance, pointing to Himself, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."¹ "He that believeth . . . hath passed out of death into life."² He was sure that demonstration and proof would come to all who honestly lent themselves to this life and gave it fair trial; for if a man had "faith even as a grain of mustard seed," he had got a true glimpse of God, had a principle or rather a power by which to guide his life—the only one fit to embrace and to account for all it contains and concerns, whether heavenly or earthly.

¹ John xiv. 6.

² John v. 24.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE

WHEN we looked at Christ's knowledge of the men and things around Him we found that the mass of it was gained by Him just as by other men. We saw that it was bounded by an ignorance akin, except in a few cases, to that which marks mankind. So that now we need not be surprised if He did not know things which lay in front, far or near, unless according to His extraordinary but natural power, or by a knowledge of certain points through information such as might have been given to any prophet. As in the case of His knowledge of men and things, so in regard to His knowledge of the future—much of what we should be at first sight inclined to assign to supernatural sources, resolves itself into the results of what must have been merely human. We may conclude, then, that in this department our Saviour saw and knew by the same powers, and with the same characteristics, as we have already observed in connection with the working of His human mind.

There are one or two passages which seem to bear on this subject, but must first be set aside as inapplicable. The others which are relevant will then be found to separate themselves readily into groups.

For instance, when Christ said to His disciples, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come,"¹ He uttered, as we have already seen, a mere statement of fact; He offered only a presentment of the magnitude of the task appointed, and of the shortness of the opportunity for it, but not anything which had reference beyond the occasion.

In the same way we find it said, "Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth."² That does not mean that Jesus knew, apart from what He had found in the Old Testament, all the detail of His death. It implies that He was expecting His death and controlling the main circumstances connected with it; that He was not taken aback when the traitor came—having hindered him till the right moment; that He was looking for the man, because He knew the deed was near; that He was quite aware of what the rabble and the torch flare implied, as He saw that what had been divinely appointed was about to take place. He had been watching, not to foil the traitor's will, but to carry out God's purpose. Care and observation were required. As He Himself had said, "Know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through."³ His touching words in the garden, "What! could ye not watch with Me one hour,"⁴ show that this was a necessity of His life to its very end.

¹ Matt. x. 23.

³ Matt. xxiv. 43.

² John xviii. 4.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 40.

These and suchlike passages being set aside, I may repeat, before speaking on the various groups into which this department of Christ's knowledge arranges itself, that the same principles are found operative in it as we have found to be, from His constitution and position, characteristic of the knowledge He had in other departments. In that is the key to the subject.

As we know, Christ's knowledge was all gained, and His views were held under the supremacy of the principles contained in the epourania. Here likewise, then, faith in Him assumed the unity of history, and not of creation only; He saw God shining along its lines, and shining the more clearly as time went on. We have seen that when Christ quoted the Old Testament, He used it to illustrate God's will, and to picture Him by means of His great moral attributes. He dropped all that was local or passing in each case, saw immediately the remainder which was essential, and fixed it as a permanent possession for meeting the need of His own day. To Him history was the robe of God, and therefore a constant repetition of positions really similar, a kaleidoscopic combining of a few truths, as the facts varied in which they were to be embodied. We know how aptly He gauged the spirit of those around Him, and gave expression to it by quoting from Isaiah the words,¹ "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; but in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." No one can fail to see the insight by which He notes that His position is like that of Noah

¹ Isa. xxix. 13; Matt. xv. 8; Mark vii. 6.

and Lot,¹ summing up an age and foretelling the catastrophe of its end, or by which He recognises that He is the reality which is prefigured in the use of the brazen serpent.² In fact, to Christ prophecy was nothing more than the assertion and the repeated illustration of principles still ready to show themselves in actual operation when the circumstances warranted. The past illustrated the present to Him and made it intelligible, and the future was guaranteed by them both. In all there must ever be the same God, wise and good. So when His disciples asked Him as to the blind man,³ whether the explanation of this congenital blindness were that the man or his parents had sinned, He replied unhesitatingly, piercing the unknown past as well as the unseen future by His answer, "Neither; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Similarly, when He said that the Father judges no man,⁴ but "hath given all judgment unto the Son," He added as the reason for it, His being "the Son of Man";⁵ and so He interpreted the future by the present, seeing in what He was the moral guarantee of that which lay necessarily afar off.

You remember also how, because of this ethical view of history, the Saviour had no difficulty in assuming to Himself the ideal experience of every right-minded Jew, and even of the nation itself, as the servant of God. He did this, alike in regard to salvation through suffering, and in regard to judgment on sin. What, however, pointed forward to Him and His own day, was also carried

¹ Matt. xxiv. 37 ff.; Luke xvii. 26 ff.

² John iii. 14.

³ John ix. 3.


⁴ John v. 22.

⁵ John v. 27.

forward by Him beyond His own day, to be fulfilled by Him in a second day, so far as it was unfulfilled in the first. Thus, as to the future, He was guided by what He saw in the past. But He was ignorant, and content to be ignorant of its detail, just as in the case of the epourania, if the ignorance did not hamper Him or affect His work. The moral content of the future, as of the present and the past, was all-important to Him. However, He had never any doubt as to the moral aspects of life. He saw God, not in nature around only, but in the pathway of providence in front, and waiting at its end. So His view of the future was prophetic, because it was ethical or vital. And thus, as death seemed to him sleep, as the spiritual foreshadowed and guaranteed the bodily resurrection, as He found in God's aim by Israel a foreshadowing of His own duty, so we find Him seeing His first and second advent as if in line, and thinking of the things to come according to the spiritual principle they embody.

Let us now look at the cases in which the Saviour shows knowledge of the future, and see if we can ascertain how it was arrived at. When classified according to their objects, these passages consist of those on the judgment, on rewards, on the fate of His followers, on the Church, and on the coming and work of the Holy Spirit. Along with these come the predictions relative to His death and resurrection, and, in fine, one or two cases mainly referring to His own second coming, which are peculiar in their difficulty but not in their nature.

The fact of judgment was, I think, in the case of Jesus, a moral certainty not supernaturally attained.



In this way He seems to put it when He says,¹ "The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." The way in which His mind wrought on the subject comes out in the very form of the expression,² "Shall not God avenge His elect, which cry unto Him day and night? . . . I say unto you that He will avenge them speedily," for there is implied in these words an appeal to conscience, and there is clear the implication of an answer which conscience will seal. Of course, on the other hand, the fact that judgment would be by Himself had a supernatural element in it; for it rested on the fact of His own importance. As He said,³ "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent;" "He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;"⁴ and, "If I had not come, they had not had sin."⁵ He tells us expressly that the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, because He is the Son of Man;⁶ that is, not only because He is sympathetic and qualified to judge, but because He has come forth to seek and to save. He is not only fit to judge, He has the right to judge.

The detail which is connected with all this, as the filling in of the picture—His coming, for instance, in His Father's glory and with the holy angels—is nothing

¹ Matt. xii. 35-37.

² Luke xviii. 7.

³ John vi. 29.

⁴ John iii. 36.

⁵ John xv. 22.

⁶ John v. 27.

more than the necessary and natural inference from the fact of judgment "because He is the Son of Man." The details of judgment are, in fact, largely, if not wholly, deduced from His moral knowledge; they form part of an idealised description—the only one possible to our appreciation, and fully representative of the facts, whether the only one possible to Him or not. For instance, we find Him reasoning as to what the end must be, in such a passage as¹ "For judgment came I into this world,"—explained by the words,—“that they which see not may see, and that they which see may become blind.”

He saw the same principle at work through successive generations till the end: "The last state of that man cometh worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation,"² said He; and again, "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."³ But though such a description as "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me,"⁴ is purely an ideal, embodying a moral principle, yet it is a concise and accurate picture, calculated to impress the truth deeply, and to influence.

Accordingly, when we pass the border line, and are brought face to face, not with what occurs in the judgment, but in the other world, we may take it for granted that the same method of pictorial idealism and practical ethical realism is followed. As truly as the parable of the drag-net represents a terrible moral truth, which

¹ John ix. 39-41.

² Matt. xii. 45.

³ Matt. xxi. 43.

⁴ Matt. xxv. 31 ff.

we understand in this world and see even now, so truly do the conceptions of the sheep and goats, of the outer darkness, and of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and of fire in the world to come. The teaching is not less real that it is pictorial; its emblems have reality as regards moral meaning; their meaning is only the more terrible because mere literal interpretation and physical reference do not exhaust it.

We must regard the duration of future punishment in the same manner as the fact. Christ could look on it in no other aspect than lengthwise, stretching out in front of Him. Life after death presented itself of necessity as everlasting on both its lines. Still, the Saviour rested His assurance of its condition, not on how the thing appeared, but on the moral certitude of the greatness of His own person and mission. "This," He says, "is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness."¹ He looked on Himself as closing men into their aeon of responsibility, with much greater gravity than did Noah and Lot.

So too, when we go on to consider the rewards of the kingdom, we find that they are rewards really; that is, they are suitable to the taste and merit of those who can appreciate them and have aimed at them. The bliss of the blessed is the natural result of their spiritual condition. The beatitudes, for instance, express this in its simplest form. On the other hand, it is fittingly promised, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall

¹ John iii. 19.

receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."¹ And so when Peter asked Jesus,² "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee; what then shall we have?" Jesus said to him, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me" (in the work of regenerating Israel), "in the regeneration, . . . also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It is absurd to say that this was the result of Christ's initial, narrow-minded exclusiveness as a Jew; the saying is a pictorial presentment of the suitableness of the reward, and of the fact that it is one which the recipient will value as real. When the ambitious among the Saviour's disciples desired to sit in the highest place in His kingdom, He expanded the simple principle, that he who would become greatest must become like a little child, or be servant of all. He showed Himself to be the embodiment of it, but declined to decide about others and the coveted honour. He could do no more than state the conditions, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"³ "It is not Mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of My Father" (*i.e.* those fitted for it).

From the same principles Christ arrived at the fate which must await His followers. Nay, He let us see the process going on in His own mind. He deduced their fate from His own. He declared that, if He were really their Master, the similarity of their character and His own would secure that they could not be treated

¹ Mark x. 29.² Matt. xix. 27-29.³ Matt. xx. 22, 23.

differently. "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"¹ "Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake."² "Because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."³ Having announced His own death, He immediately added, as the rule for all, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it."⁴

About His Church He reasoned from the same principle. What He knew of its future He knew by means of His knowledge of the powers at work to produce and to hinder it. He saw its future as He saw that of the kingdom of God, when He compared the spread of that to leaven, and its final growth to the growth of the mustard plant. When Peter made his great confession in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew,⁵ Christ burst forth in joyful recognition of the advance which had been made, exclaiming, Thou art Peter (*πέτρος*); not Simon only, but hewn from the great block or mass, *πέτρα*; made so by having had revealed to thee, not of flesh and blood but of the Father in heaven, who alone knows the Son, the great fact confessed as a sure conviction; and on this *πέτρα* (solid mass—the confession), not on the *πέτρος* (a mere splint or boulder), I will build My Church, so that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. The assurance expressed is manifestly general and comprehensive, for it is based on spiritual and moral, that is, general grounds. Christ had seen

¹ Matt. x. 25.² Matt. x. 22.³ John xv. 19.⁴ Matt. xvi. 25.⁵ Matt. xvi. 16.

that the basis, the one foundation of all His own knowledge, the most profound belief and the regulative fact of His own experience, that which opened out to His human soul the Godhead and its heaven, had become, by purely human methods, the intelligent conviction of an ordinary man, when kept near Himself and under the power of the Holy Ghost. By that all became possible. The man had become essentially one with Him in His view of God and of the needs of men; he could appreciate God's aim, at least partially, and lend himself to the gaining of it. This first case argued the possibility of innumerable others in due time. He Himself as the leaven from above had begun to work in the mass. When He saw faith springing up within this ignorant, earthly man, and beheld a replica of His own perfect being in process of creation, He traced a guarantee for a spiritual succession of which He did not know the limits: "First the blade, then the ear":¹ "he knoweth not how."²

We shall see that from the first moment Jesus appears in public, thoughts of His death, and it as not common but peculiar, were present to Him. How the thought arose and took this particular character, we have already seen in connection with the development of the epourania. In the Temptation the allurements were the escape from death on the Cross. In the first official visit to Jerusalem the matter is stated in language sufficiently clear, yet studiously prophetic, *i.e.* so as to be recognisable only after the event. In this light, John says, he saw it when the Holy Spirit had come. "When there-

¹ Mark iv. 28.

² Mark iv. 27.

fore He was raised, His disciples remembered," is this apostle's explanation. When the Saviour was not under the immediate gloom of the Cross, the thought of resurrection seems to have been the natural companion of the expectation as to His death. This faith in His speedy and special resurrection most probably rested on the assurance that of Him, not only Divine but well-pleasing, it was much more true than of any Old Testament saint, that "Thou wilt not leave My soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption."¹

We must now look at a few passages concerning the Saviour's view of the coming of His kingdom and of the judgment day. Their interest is peculiar, for their difficulties are exceptional. They do not belong to the simple class which, even at a glance, show they merely follow out and embody some moral principle. They seem at first sight to impugn Christ's accuracy, and to represent Him as in a state of confusion about the great events of the future, notably about these two great points—the coming of His kingdom and of judgment.

Some would explain the difficulty by reminding us of what is quite true, namely, that to Christ His first and second coming were in line; that, indifferently, the coming of His kingdom at Pentecost and at the general resurrection expressed the same idea; that for Him the impending judgment on Jerusalem was at once sign and pledge of the universal one which is to close the earth's cycle. Now these are undoubted truths; but whether they be available as explanations, or whether they are wholly

¹ Ps. xvi. 10.

satisfactory as such by themselves, is a point only to be determined by the inspection of each case in the text and not by general considerations, however true these may be.

We read that Jesus said,¹ "Shall not God avenge His elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them? I say unto you that He will avenge them speedily. Howbeit when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Now, the very way in which this is expressed makes it plain that the whole is simply the result of ethical conviction. However, when we look into the first half of the statement, we find that Christ is using two measures of time when speaking of the judgment which is to come on the oppressors of God's elect. The one is such as men might use; the other is more suitable to God or to Himself. The elect, judging as men do, find the delay trying; they cry day and night. Jesus, looking at the thing from God's point of view and by faith,—perfect, as even the elect are not,—proclaims justice speedily. The statement was not made as to the class in His own age, but in all ages. Delay is the characteristic of judgment in men's eyes. But even if the end be not soon it is speedy; it comes as quickly as possible, and without any unnecessary delay; and this is all that can be said. This double-sided way of seeing things is, as we have already found, characteristic often of Christ's thought.

When we turn to the second part of the statement we find that it does not seem to express anything more than a great law which follows from the first part, this

¹ Luke xviii. 7, 8.

namely, that the outcome of all God's dealing with the world, whether waiting or avenging, is nevertheless of no ultimate and saving good to it. The uselessness alike of patience and of punishment even when persevered in, authorises the end; the summing up in the general judgment, and the second coming in order to it, become possible.

We find, then, in this passage, that Christ combined general laws and particular facts to attain His conclusion. They lay together in His mind by the practical interest which bound them together for Him, namely, the salvation of men. Providence and judgment interested Him as they affected salvation. The elect were interested in judgment and personal right, Christ in salvation and the good of the world. He had no thought of immediate judgment; He knew it would come as soon as possible; but He saw that, in order to authorise it, all possible means in the interest of salvation must be employed, whether these actually secured it or not.

In another place we find that Jesus added and spake a parable,¹ "Because He was nigh to Jerusalem" (and so to His end), "and because His disciples supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear," apart from, or at least before, His death. He wished to remove their ideas of immediate outward glory, and to prevent them from being altogether cast down or faithless when His death occurred. The parable of the pounds, which He then spoke, had reference to the increase of responsibility which was to lead up to His coming again and to the judgment. By it He diverted their attention from

¹ Luke xix. 11 ff.

glory, because it was far off; and directed it to responsibility, because that was near. Yet this expression of His knowledge on such a subject was only elicited incidentally by their evident ignorance regarding it.

We are now, therefore, in a position to look at the difficult saying,¹ "Verily I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." For we have found that whilst Christ saw His own presence meant judgment, and cumulative judgment, on His own people and generation, He saw also that there lay a long process beyond that, after which alone could it be possible for Him to come and judge mankind. Now, can it have been that at this period, slightly earlier than the other, when He was fully convinced of coming death, and hoped for the accompanying resurrection, can it be that He thought the final glory of His kingdom would burst forth, say with the latter, or just after that? Though I have emphasised the growth of our Saviour's views, as well as of His nature and faculties, I do not think there is any reason whatever to infer any advance in this matter at that time. For, to begin with, Christ says nothing of the glory of His kingdom. He speaks of His kingdom; and it did come—begin to come, at least—with His resurrection and at Pentecost. One might even say that it had come by the time He was speaking, and daily thereafter came more clearly. "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you."² But at Pentecost the kingdom came, as Mark says, "with power."³ The warrantable-

¹ Matt. xvi. 28.

² Matt. xii. 28.

³ Mark ix. i.

ness of this interpretation is fully borne out, for we find Christ repeatedly taking this progressive view of His kingdom. So it is that He says,¹ "Henceforth" (*ἀπ' ἄρτι*, or as in Luke² it is interpreted by *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν*) not "hereafter," as in our ordinary version, "ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." The kingdom coming in power, as Mark puts the matter, interprets for us "The Son of Man coming in His kingdom," as Matthew puts it.


Perhaps the most difficult passage of all is that³ in which we find that the disciples came to their Master after He had foretold the destruction of the temple, asking Him, as He sat on the Mount of Olives, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" At the first glance it is apparent that here we have not one query but several; and that although a definite point started the request, it broadened itself out to comprehend three. The disciples evidently embraced the opportunity as a pretext for getting light upon their perplexed views in regard to the future. By their question they asked about several great events—about the temple's downcome, Christ's coming, and the final judgment. The form of their question shows their ignorance and confusion; for them the destruction of the temple might have been connected with the last judgment, and it might have been near, even in their own day. One feels here, that though the things asked by the disciples are clear enough, yet these were not distinct in their minds. They followed the method

¹ Matt. xxvi. 64.² Luke xxii. 69.³ Matt. xxiv. 3.

of those who are in mental confusion, and are afraid of omitting any necessary part of that which they see looming but vaguely. They repeated the phrases in the hope of expressing themselves adequately, even if it were at haphazard, in order to get a satisfactory answer. But though they felt their ignorance, they did not look upon Christ as either vague or confused in His knowledge of the subject. Naturally, His answer was such as fitted them and their need. The answer He gave to them is that which is recorded. Of course He did not answer them according to the letter, but, as always, according to the spirit of their request. He did not confine Himself to the single point which had given rise to the subject, but dealt with the various points they had mentioned, and aimed at giving them the information they sought on these, so far as was possible to Him and suitable to them.

Let us remember, in looking at His answer, what we have seen from other passages, that Christ knew the end to be far off, though He expected wrath on His own generation; that He expected a speedy beginning of His kingdom, and a great spread of world-wide preaching ere the end could come. Let us remember that all the interest He had in the great train of events thus indicated was just as they influenced salvation.

The disciples had enumerated three distinct points in their question. Christ keeps the three clear in His reply. First of all He warns them that the end—that is not His own end, of course, but the end of the world—"is not yet"; and, stretching out before Him, He sees two long lines of activity, one hostile and persecuting, the other



patient and preaching ; both of which prepare for the end. After these, "then shall the end come." Having warned them thus of the long ages which must elapse ere the end could come, and having cleared the ground of any misconception on this great point, He turns back to their present need,—the need which they of that generation would soon meet,—their difficulty connected with the temple's downfall. On this point, because it lies closer to their time and affects them more directly, He becomes, after the prophetic manner, more explicit and detailed. He gives them the sign by which the tribulation, which is connected with it, could be known to be at hand. He points to the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, which shall be seated in the holy place. Still, He takes the precaution of expressly warning them that they are not to look on this sign as immediately preceding, or indeed as being in any way connected with, the coming of the Son of Man ; for that event there will be no warning whatsoever, only a great and prolonged preparation composed of changes greater far than the fall of the temple—changes in which the whole established order of things will give way, and physical powers will become secondary. At the end of an indefinitely long period of such change the coming of the Son of Man and the end are to be. No sign shall herald Him ; His coming shall be the sign of the end : then "shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." The effect of His coming is to be great mourning over all the earth, but salvation to the elect. We are not concerned with what was meant by the sign of the Son of Man,—whether Christ the dethroner of adverse

powers and enthroned in their stead, or something by which He might be recognised,—for neither were they concerned with it. Nor are we concerned with the order and relations of the sign and the various events gathered together as happening at the end. Clearly, what is mentioned, apart from the destruction of Jerusalem in their own time, was intended just to give them a sufficient view of the ground covered by all the rest of the question. For us the interest lies in this, that He separated the two things—the one which was near, and the one which was far—from each other. In fact, if we remember that, though the one was reached by the assurance He had of the responsibility His presence brought on His own generation, the other was the embodiment rather of a great moral principle; and if we remember that, though the first in its detail was (as we saw, p. 46) a matter of special supernatural revelation, the other was but a general and ideal description, we shall have little difficulty in seeing that it was impossible for the Saviour to have confused the two things.

The rest of the passage must, of course, be interpreted in view of what had preceded. The persons who had heard that would certainly in its light understand what followed. Thus, when Christ went on to say, that as the young fig-tree leaves foretold summer, “even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that He (or it) is nigh, even at the doors: verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished,” He spoke as an intelligent man, who did not contradict Himself on such plain and impressive points at once, and to intelligent people, unable to fail

in understanding His words after what they had heard. "All these things" must, therefore, be those which He had just said would be fulfilled in the experience of that generation. Whence we find that He had returned again after His digression, and had begun to speak of their own day, and what affected them, rather than the end of the world, in which they were but indirectly interested. As if eager to ensure the impossibility of being misunderstood, He tells them, in contrast to the foregoing, and in reference to the other thing of which He had spoken at their request—"but of that hour" (not "these things," as in verse 34—not what followed on the presence of the abomination seated in the temple, but what succeeds the sudden appearing of the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, unheralded save by a long preparatory process), "of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." For, whatever the sign be of that coming, it shall not warn men any more than God's judgment in the days of Noah. All shall go on as usual till too late. One shall be taken and another left, though they lived and worked together; for the one watched for the Son, the other did not.

As we have seen, the two facts, though in line, represented different things to Christ; they were attained by very different means, and so it was impossible for Him to have confused them. The information He had as to the one was much fuller than as to the other. He had special information of the details of the nearer. Symbols, large and vague but impressive, were enough to set forth that which lay further off. The knowledge as to the one

came by special revelation, was given supernaturally for a special purpose, was impossible to Him otherwise. The other He saw as an embodiment of general moral principle, crossed by the knowledge given in the epourania as to His own spiritual importance. He saw the one as a step near at hand in, the other as the completion afar of, the great moral process His presence originated.

CHAPTER IX

CHRIST'S SELF-GUIDANCE

ONE thing we may take for granted, I think—that Christ's aim was unselfish, and its methods correspondingly spiritual.

His aim was unlike that of other men. He showed it as early as twelve years old, when He said, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" and from it He never departed. He could say without any boasting, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." It was no exaggeration for Him to say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work." He made up His mind that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,"¹ and He remained true to His ideal. From the first His aim was to fulfil all righteousness, whatever that might entail.

In this aim and its associated methods, the distinction between the life of Christ and that of all others is found. He who was filled with the Spirit and loyal to the epourania was different from others, and was forced into separation from them. Now in that loyalty and opposition is found the power that moulded

¹ Matt. iv. 4.

His life and forced it to take the shape into which it developed.

Christ's views and acts and words were not those of ordinary men; for He felt a sense of duty to God, rather than of relation to men. The obligation to preserve the trust of His own personality inviolable was for Him paramount. God's claims on Him were more than men's; so He felt Himself more closely allied to the great end of His life, than to the persons and duties of any earthly household. "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?" He asked: "whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven."¹ Loyalty to His nature and its conscience was the method by which He hoped to gain that end. The reason for His earthly existence was the absolute rule for its guidance.

The spirituality of Christ was that which roused the opposition and hatred of even the religious world of His day. He was quite unworldly; He never showed any trace of selfishness. He never sought wealth; He died a poor man; His only legacies were His robe and His mother. So far as we know, He never had been any richer; for, as Judas lets us see incidentally, the bag was kept empty by a generosity that was systematically beneficent; the Master lived in a loving dependence which sought only that which was needful. In the spirit of His own description, "the Son of Man had not where to lay His head." He never sought the help of riches, though it was latterly given to Him unsought. His hardest words were spoken of, and sometimes to, rich men. In the same way He sought no aid from human influence;

¹ Matt. xii. 48-50.

He accepted not the witness of men. In fact, the influential men of His land were arrayed against Him, Pharisees and Sadducees being combined, and Herod and Pilate being made friends for the occasion.

If He had had ambitions, however, they might have been easily gratified without such aid. We may fancy that the devil's temptations, had they been yielded to, would have been mere deceptions, yet royalty was once and again within the grasp of Christ. Galilee might have been in its enthusiasm easily led up to Jerusalem, and the proclamation of a national Messiah would have rallied all ranks. Peræan enthusiasm, even that of Jerusalem in the end and to the last day, might have been diverted by Him to such an object easily, through a few judicious admissions. But He who refused to interfere in such unspiritual matters as the dividing of an inheritance among brethren, had in His mind and heart a kingdom not of this world. His rule was not to be based on the unstable foundation of popular enthusiasm. He sought the praise of God and not of men. His was to be a kingdom that should never be moved.

Christ could not lower His aim or alter His methods to please anyone. He could not be other than Himself. He could not change; the only question was whether others would. For, as we have seen, the Saviour's deep convictions of truth filled Him with a sense of His duty in laying on all other men what He felt Himself bound to obey. He came to call sinners. He preached the gospel of repentance and of the kingdom; and one of the signs of the Spirit in Him was, that to the poor the gospel was preached. When Capernaum crowds

would have kept Him to themselves, the remark made to those who informed Him of that desire was, "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent";¹ and, it is added, "He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee."

Immense popularity fell at times to the lot of Jesus. But that did not mark real favour; it only accentuated the opposition and hatred which met Him, and tended to force His life into its final shape. This influence was at work all through His ministry. As early as His first official visit to the capital, His miracles created a sensation, and, even some time after that, the surge of it was distinctly and unexpectedly felt by Him in Galilee. During His Galilean and Peræan ministries, the difficulty was to avoid rather than to gain popularity. If He healed a leper He enjoined silence; and yet so much the more did the man trumpet abroad the news. If He healed a deaf and dumb man, He took him aside from the crowd for privacy whilst He did it, and forbade the man to enter the village again; yet it could not be hid. The effect of the raising of the widow of Nain's son was wide and deep; it spread even beyond Galilee, and reached John in prison. Multitudes thronged Him, till He had to leave the land for the lake; they followed Him from city to city, outside the cities into desert places, up mountains, and across the lake. They lingered with Him to the very verge of human endurance. Pharisees came as eagerly and regularly as did publicans. In like manner, Peræan crowds thronged Him and trod one on another. In

¹ Luke iv. 42-44.

Jerusalem He was always the great centre of discussion and interest at the feasts, even to the end, just as He had been in the desert of Jordan at the beginning of His ministry, where He had made more disciples than John, and became a marked man even for the metropolis.

Now, though this popularity, which as anyone can see at a glance He did not seek, which came on Him in the course of His work as something incidental, which was thrust on Him all unwilling, seeing that He found it rather a hindrance than a help in His work—though this popularity was not that which roused the tide of opposition to Him as a person with a mission, yet undoubtedly it coloured the whole course of His life. It accentuated the position. It made the antagonism and hatred of the ecclesiastical rulers towards Him more bitter and more pronounced. The opposition was, of course, based really on His spiritual aims and methods. But His popularity seemed to attest their success, and the loss of power by those who opposed Him. "If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him";¹ and "Behold, how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after Him,"² was the private admission of His enemies, even when the end was easily in sight. As early as His first official visit to the temple, opposition of the keenest kind was aroused by His spiritual views of that edifice and of its uses, and by His refusal to give any sign of His authority. When His second visit came, the opposition was quite open. "For this cause," it is said,³ "the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only

¹ John xi. 48.

² John xii. 19.

³ John v. 18.

brake the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." The Pharisees were filled with madness at Him, early in His Galilean ministry, because He healed on the Sabbath day,¹ so that they communed with one another, what they might do to Him. When, at a later date, He visited Jerusalem, the crowds recognised Him as the person who had been doomed before: "Some of them of Jerusalem said, is not this He whom they seek to kill?"² He Himself asserted that their hatred was due to the difference of nature in Him and in them. "He that is of God heareth the words of God."³ "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do."⁴ In Peræa the earlier policy, and the cruder, was to provoke Him by saying many things, and then try to catch Him in His words.⁵ Later, they changed their tactics, and took to warning Him against Herod,⁶ or even to inviting Him, as if a friend, to share their hospitality.⁷ Before the resurrection of Lazarus initiated the final stage of his Master's life, the disciples could foresee what going into Judæa must mean, just as really as Jesus did. "The Jews were but now" (John viii. 59) "seeking to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" they asked; and then Thomas added, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."⁸ But Jesus could not resist the sense of duty He felt toward His dead friend. So, finally, the high priest's voice gave the keynote which commanded the universal approbation of the rulers, expressing the tacit desire of

¹ Luke vi. 11.² John vii. 25.³ John viii. 47.⁴ John viii. 44.⁵ Luke xi. 54.⁶ Luke xiii. 31.⁷ Luke xiv. 1.⁸ John xi. 8, 16.

some of them and the unformed thought of many—"it is expedient that one man should die for the people."

Thus, though the popularity of Jesus did not flow from His spirituality, but only arose as something incidental in the pursuit of His aims, it became the means of bringing His life to a crisis, and was the occasion of giving expression to that hatred of Himself and of His spirituality which had marked the treatment accorded Him from the first. He had to accept the results of His popularity and not of His spirituality only, though the former was quite out of keeping with His work. He had to try to carry out His work, notwithstanding His popularity and its consequences.

The problem for us is to see how Christ guided Himself in the attempt to carry out His spiritual aims, notwithstanding the opposition He encountered and the barriers with which men thus hemmed Him in. It would not have been unnatural to expect that, when He found the body of the people unsympathetic, and the rulers frankly opposed to all spirituality, He would have taken active measures to promote a crusade against the latter, even though He had needed to throw Himself into the arms of the former. But He did not. So far from that, He relied not even on Himself, much less on mere men for success. He looked to God ; He lived by faith. Through faith He chose His line of life ; but for that reason it was not new to Him ; He had lived by it in private, and knew it to be right. He never hesitated about its being the method by which He ought to act, though now the action was official. He believed that God, who had placed Him where He was to do a definite work, would not fail Him

in showing how it should be carried out. He felt the weakness of His own manhood ; He saw in those around Him the unreliability of human nature. Instead of seeking the help of men He fled from it. They needed help ; they were not fit to give it. He relied on God.

Stranger still, so far from relying on them in His opposition to prevailing unspirituality, He did not even set Himself out as its professed antagonist ; that is, He did not turn His whole life directly to that as His main end, though He took opportunities of showing indubitably His feelings about it. He did not seek to destroy error by the embroilment of human arguing, for that would have left the heart unconvinced and unchanged, and would have rendered the spirit more embittered ; He sought to spiritualise men by attractive and clear presentation of the truth. It does not need to be said that He did not shrink from controversy, or at times stop short of stern denunciation, when these were thrust on Him, and when enemies could not injure His work through them. Even though His denunciations were scathing, His holiness was perfect. He could engage in controversy with sure success and without harm to His own spirit ; yet He clung to this other and more spiritual method as His choice. His great desire was to create spirituality ; consequently opposition was much more that of others against Him than of Him against others.

Yet the strangest thing of all was, that the following out of such an aim by faith, as its congenial method, seemed to tie His hands, and to render Him apparently helpless. He was forced by it to lead a passive, waiting life, instead of dashing out into the eager fray. He

distrusted even His own humanity, and relied on God alone. He felt that for Him to live simply as God desired would be for Him to do the work desired by God. He, then, who came to call sinners to repentance, yet lived according to the prophecy which had been uttered about Him so long before, that He should not cry aloud or make His voice to be heard in the streets.

The guiding feature which lay at the root of all Christ's conduct of life was His belief in the reality and exactness of providence. God had sent Him to serve, and God would not allow Him to fail in the service, if He did only what God showed Him to be right. God not only spoke in His conscience and from the Old Testament, God showed Himself beckoning or frowning in all the detail of ordinary life. Hence His belief was that His Father would supply Him with what was necessary for carrying out His life's work, whether the need were physical or spiritual; for Him there was nothing but to remain loyal and willing, hearty and sympathetic. He must not allow any other object to distract and engross His attention; He must watch for this one, and preserve the submission of His will in the carrying of it out. He believed that what providence presented to Him would bring about God's will, if treated with perfect, unswerving principle of moral righteousness, if treated according to His own eternal nature and the promptings of His new one, which had been supplied Him as being harmonious. His first duty was to preserve intact the nature which had been entrusted to Him; God could not require it to be violated. His work in it was not to do simply what He Himself might please, or

as much good of a general kind as He could, but what God wished. His work in healing, for instance, was not to heal as many as possible, seeking out all the cases available, and following them up in an ever-widening circle till Galilee and perhaps all Judæa was, for the time being, an absolutely healthy land. His work was to heal only such as God designed. On the same principle, it was not for Him to occupy Himself with the outer Gentile world, but to follow this limiting rule of right life among His own people, along its peculiar channels, and within their fitting restraints. It was for Him to watch what God might send. Men came on the various tides of life and influence which flowed around Him,—uncontrollable, and even unrecognised,—and were cast up before Him as wreckage is on the shore by the waves. To these God gave Him a duty according to His powers. To discharge it perfectly was His responsibility. It was not for Him to take the initiative in opposing the spiritual rulers as John the Baptist had done. It was for Him to wait and accept such opportunities as God gave of creating spirituality till further and more direct ones were opened up.

If we read the Gospels carefully we find that the great mass of Christ's life was not determined or shaped by Himself, any more than a child's birth is by the child, but in the providence of God by the action of others. The Saviour was not like a stake stuck in the ground immovably, or like an axle regulating the movements of others round Him by His own will, but like a buoy moored firmly to a rock, both responding to and moving freely among all the currents, yet never carried



away from His own point of attachment, namely, the consciousness of His own divinity and of His calling. Providence led Him hither and thither, and He followed. Affairs drove Him here and there, and He went. But always He moved that He might do God's will, and always without selfish aim, with the powers of His whole being at the service of those with whom He was brought into contact. His sole aim was to do as God wished, and gain God's ends. For that He waited and watched; for that He lived and suffered. He would take no step forward, engage in nothing, without clear light on this point, that there might be no mistake on His part in word or deed because of any self-confidence. Thus our Saviour's life, however full of activity, was filled up with what found its initiative in God and its means in men; and His path was that of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day. Let us see the wonder and simplicity of His method.

As I have said, Christ did not pursue the people who were to be affected by Him either in their spirit or their body; He simply waited for them. He recognised that within His human limits He was not fitted to cope personally with all; just as He had felt that He was not fit to deal with any till His powers were ripe. He looked on Himself as intended to deal only with certain persons, who were the chosen means of affecting others. The guidance given He recognised, and believed they might recognise also.

It is unmistakable that He did not control the appearance of His forerunner, and that He did not court, perhaps even anticipate, John's confession of Him—

either that made to Himself alone or that made before the Baptist's own followers.¹ He trusted God for the one and for the other, as indications of the Divine will, and as such He accepted them. Till the forerunner came He remained subject and waiting at Nazareth, and when he came forth, He waited still for the same guidance as had been given before. He followed no different method of life during His ministry from that which He had pursued ere it began.

In His active ministry His life was moulded largely by those who came to Him. He seems to have admitted the claim to help of all who were brought under His notice, and to have been ruled by the conviction that He possessed earthly existence in order to gain in them God's spiritual ends. Their coming was in His view the expression of God's will in regard to them. He expected that God had prepared them ere He brought them. As His power, His life was not His own but for others, He seemed to lie open to the four winds of heaven. He felt the appeal of all with whom He was brought into contact. He was laid under contribution by them all. The "universality" of the gospel He preached He first of all Himself practised. All the Father had given would come, and the men who came were to be in no wise cast out. Nicodemus comes to Him out of all the excited crowds of the great city, a prepared heart otherwise lost, hopelessly lost among the people. The woman of Samaria comes to Him, and soon He has more than human guidance to inform Him that He is right in dealing with her as a chosen one whom

¹ John i. 22-31.

God has sent to receive His best gifts. In the same way God sent to Him a Jairus or a Syro-Phœnician woman, a centurion or a leper, a crowd or an individual, sick people or an inquirer. When the need made its appearance it made its appeal, and He was ready to meet that. In some cases there was bodily incapacity without thought of relief, as in the man at the pool of Bethesda; in others there was no word of appeal or capacity for it, though there was at least capacity for faith, as in the paralytic man who was borne of four; yet again, there might be no word of appeal though there was spiritual need, as in Zacchæus; and still again, there might be both bodily and spiritual need though without any expression of the faith already existing, as in the case of a woman with an infirmity of eighteen years' standing whom Jesus healed in a Galilean synagogue. The details of the cases were incidental. He accepted the persons as they came; He had no choice; He was in their power. The blessing that was needed could even be snatched without warning or permission, as in the case of the woman whom Jesus healed of the issue of blood.

The same rule held good about His teaching as in the case of His practical help. He never attempted to tell all He knew, or even all that His hearers needed, but only what they could bear. He considered their state and spoke to them, having no desire to glorify Himself but only to help them. His first disciples had come unsought at John's suggestion. He let them go as freely as they had come. They might return, bringing friends with them; but *that* He did not know, and had to wait for. Even false-hearted ones like Judas, or the

multitudes fed by Him, but turned away by His saying that His flesh was meat indeed and His blood drink indeed, even they had to be borne with, and, if watched, had yet to receive the same attention as others, till events discovered their real character. Both good and bad had to be allowed to grow together until the harvest. What I wish, then, to bring out is more than that Christ was practical, and desired to help those around Him. I wish to emphasise that in a very real sense He did not choose those around Him; rather they chose Him and came, or God had chosen and brought them.

If providence guided the fit persons to Christ, Christ found that He was supplied in the same way with the fit means of recognising them and dealing with them. Faith looked in this also for the hand of God. In such cases of providential need the Saviour found providential aid from what might be called authenticated or reliable sources, sources suggested and approved by the Word or His conscience.

Christ guided Himself, when He had no other light as to duty, by means of what might be called authenticated persons or things. As He was guided providentially in the aiding of others, so others were providentially made aids to Him. To begin with, one cannot fail to mark that, as her child, He thus looked on and obeyed His mother. He was subject even to Joseph. I have no doubt His mother's appeal in connection with the marriage in Cana was regarded by Him as more than the expression of a desire which He could gratify; it was a suggestion at least, because it came by one who had been an authority; and though it came by human

means, yet it came providentially, because it came with the consecration of love. Thus He regarded it in the light rather of an opportunity from God than of direction from her. Even clearer than this case, and without the attendant difficulties which obscure it, is the influence of the manner in which He looked on John the Baptist. No one can read the Gospels in even a hasty way without seeing clearly that from first to last Christ looked on the events of this man's life as so many landmarks, like those He found in the Old Testament as to Himself. He waited for John's coming forth; He saw in him His forerunner Elias. He did not take upon Himself to supersede God's authorised worker, but waited till God saw fit to remove him. Then He began His more extended and direct ministry, yet only at the point where the Baptist had stopped. Proximity to John's person was the means He adopted when He was in difficulty, either about beginning His work after the Temptation, or after His first visit to Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple. He refused to enter into competition with John; He gave way to the prophet in what was the forerunner's special work. When John was cast into prison Christ seems to have felt as if His hands were set free; and when John was executed He seems to have felt that, if they thus had treated the servant, much more would they thus also deal with the master, and that now the way was clear for His own death. John's death represented to Jesus the possibility of His own death coming near. As we saw in an earlier chapter, He evidently thought Himself warranted by more than human knowledge to look on

the death of His loved friend Lazarus as an authenticated source of light, a kind of signpost on the way toward death. Of course love prompted Him, just as it prompted Him in the case of His mother at Cana, of which I have spoken; but love in Lazarus made Lazarus, like her, a sign to the Saviour's love. In like manner Christ saw what was meant by the love of His spiritually-minded friend Mary, when she anointed Him, to show her dissent from the increasing bitterness of His enemies, and her increasing appreciation of Himself. Her love said plainly that He who was giving Himself was entitled to the best. By reading the spirit of her act He was confirmed as to His own future. It can scarcely be doubted that Moses and Elias were sent, as well as the angels at the Temptation and agony, because they had special significance for Him. Their presence meant confirmation and guidance. Nay, Christ's disciples ought to have possessed the same significance. And to a certain extent they did; but they were unreliable. Even when they were means of guidance, it was on their part unwittingly; for instance, they brought to the Saviour's notice the blind man of Jerusalem who sat at the roadside. They had one aim roused in them by what was presented; He had quite another. He saw by their suggestion the hand of God pointing to His duty, and affording a providential opening to Him as really as in the case of Lazarus' death. In fact, I think He looked on the priestly rulers in this light too, though their ideas and aims were so unlike His own. When they came to Him in the temple,¹ He

¹ Matt. xxi. 23.

felt by their question that the crisis had come, and met them frankly in their official capacity, with a plain statement of their hopeless opposition and prejudice. They came to Him officially as He was teaching in the temple, and in a body asked the question for which they had expressly come—the decisive question as to His authority. He looked on their question as the opportunity of formally bringing out the falsity of their spirit, and so of adding the last item to the long list of grudges they had against Him in order to doom.

Nay, I think that He even traced the hand of God in the fact that *they* sought His death; for that meant His death was not accidental or incidental, but had the meanings of both sacrifice and protest. And Judas' action seems to have been a guide to Him also; He avoided the people and Herod, not Judas and the priests.

However, one cannot fail to be impressed by this in addition, that Christ not only guided Himself by persons who seemed authenticated, but by things and places which appeared to Him in the same light. If we may judge by the use He made of them, the great Jewish feasts must have been thus seen by Him. Time and again they made providential claim on Him, as on every Jew, and revealed opportunity for His work. That He did not go up simply for the feasts themselves is clear by these facts: He went up seldom, or at least irregularly; when He went up He did not occupy Himself in the way usual on the occasions, but treated them as great representative, and professedly religious, gatherings in which to work; He did not come up at the beginning

of them when He came, or go away just when they ended, but adapted His coming and going for His own purpose. Still, their occurrence at certain times seems to have suggested to Him what He considered appropriate lines of action. The first official journey He took to Jerusalem becomes natural thus. Whither rather than to that town should He with His claim have gone? His second visit, which was quiet and without disciples, suggested itself, no doubt, as a fitting way of employing the time whilst John still held the field and prepared the people; it was a way of co-operating with John to mellow and ripen the city, so far roused by the forerunner's ministry. His third visit came when the work in Galilee was done and He was free; but it preceded His Peræan ministry, and so gave Him an opportunity of seeing the state of opinion and feeling in regard to Himself among high and low. Thus, in the middle of His Peræan ministry, He made a hasty run up to see if the same impressions still existed, or perhaps to bring them to a head. Yet these feasts were more than mere conveniences for testing opinion; they were solemn opportunities given of dealing with the nation and its representatives, of creating and ripening the public opinion, and not merely of observing it.

A clearer instance of the action of the same principle may be seen in the otherwise difficult case of the barren fig tree. That tree was to Christ an authenticated object, for in the distance He saw it bore its leaves. That was a natural authentication. But it failed, not He. He expected; but, though He was mistaken, He was entitled to expect. It put Him in the wrong when

really He was right. He would have been misrepresented through it, if He had not dealt with it as He did.

Clearest of all, of course, is the case of the Old Testament. It was in His eyes the great source of authenticated guidance. That it was the Book of the theocracy was much; that it appealed to, and rang harmony with, His own being was everything. It was His trusted guide, both in moral principle and in detailed facts.

But the same rule holds good in regard to places as to things. Take the synagogues of His native land. They had grown up since the close of the Old Testament, yet their purpose authenticated them, or rather, the honest, needy hearts which had come into them by faith did so. We find Him in them specially on the Sabbath day, and we are told that it was His custom to go into them.¹ The worshippers seemed in His eyes to have special claim on Him. Thus, though frowning faces surrounded Him, He could not help Himself; He was even compelled to take the initiative unsolicited.² Though hostile hearts laid traps for Him, He came still, and acted as if they had been unknown.³ Frequently the person in need seems to have been there before Christ Himself, or at least to have declared himself only after Christ had begun to speak, and when He could not well avoid acting as need demanded.⁴ At anyrate, Christ did not hesitate to declare Himself in the synagogues even officially, in spite of danger.⁵

¹ Mark vi. 2; Luke iv. 16.

² Luke xiii. 12; Mark i. 23.

³ Luke vi. 7; Matt. xii. 10.

⁴ Mark iii. 1; Luke xiii. 10, 11.

⁵ Luke iv. 16; Matt. xiii. 54.

In like manner, the temple seems to have been the terminus of all His Jerusalem journeys. In it His acts were official, and He dealt there with the nation. That the rulers felt it to be so is clear by the way in which they came, as we have already seen, after the second cleansing of the temple, to ask Him there the authority by which He did these things. His earliest visit to it meant evidently more of privilege than He had ever enjoyed, though the persons connected with it, and the possibilities apparent in them, seem to have suppressed in Him for the time being reflection about the associations connected with it, or to have left such ideas present only as a vague sub-consciousness, which manifested itself in a ground-swell of excitement. When He went to the city He was sure, and as soon as possible, to direct His steps toward it.¹ His two cleansings of it were intended to make clear to the rulers that He wished to set the worship spiritually right, and that He held to His purpose, even if He failed to get their aid. We find Him waiting in its sacred precincts—the porches specially—as in an official inquiry room open to all comers.² What happened there was sent of God; the rulers' question was official and national, the children's praises were nothing less than the fulfilling of Old Testament prophecy.

The same principle holds good, too, in the case of Jerusalem itself. It was specially loved. The Saviour's words,³ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen

¹ John vii. 2, 14.

² Mark xi. 27; Luke xx. 1.

³ Luke xiii. 34, cp. xix. 41.

gathereth her own brood," must have had a real meaning. The affection of His heart, as well as His sense of its importance as a place, must have made it a special object of regard. Though He recognised that it could not be that a prophet could perish out of Jerusalem—the slayer of the prophets and stoner of them that were sent unto her—His command about the gospel, after all was done, was, "beginning at Jerusalem."

Galilee, too, had a special significance for Him. What He argued from it failed, not because He was mistaken, but because, as with the fig tree, other causes were at work.¹ So had Judæa. Though His heart and feelings were far too large to be limited by it, the land had a first place for Him. He touched on Samaria and Syro-Phœnicia, but only by accident—as it were for a moment and through stress of circumstances. He evidently tried to cover the whole country, yet only it, by His preaching. If, humanly, He could not expect to do more, it had the first claim. Jerusalem was ever His first object and Galilee second, but the whole land was at least remembered. The long accredited people, and the fact of His own birth, designated the locality, and, in a way, the range of His life-work.

But perhaps the most remarkable use made by Christ of such authenticated persons and places, is His constant tendency, when in doubt, when He has lost the track, so to speak, to hark back to the last place where He met God, or at least was acknowledged by Him. Thus we find Him coming to John and the region of His baptism, after He sees the state of feeling in Jerusalem by means

¹ John iv. 43.

of His first visit. Yet, though He seems to copy John, He does not attach Himself to the prophet. He only remains in the district till His Father makes His way out of it clear again. For there, still earlier, He had done nothing but wait, and God had opened up His way by sending to Him unsought disciples who had been followers of the Baptist. So He returned to Cana when He found the rest of Galilee unsuitable. This is what John means when he says,¹ "*Therefore Jesus came again unto Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine.* And," he adds, to show the effect of that step as well as its reason, and so to vindicate it, that "a certain nobleman of Capernaum" was thus able to find the Saviour, and to become the nucleus of the Church in that town. By His return from Syro-Phœnicia to His headquarters at Capernaum He had His way opened up for going to Jerusalem and for leaving Galilee, because there His work was finished. When His visits failed in Galilee, and Capernaum was exhausted, He still visited Nazareth a second time, as if unwilling to close His ministry in the north with such a curse resting over the place of His boyhood as the rejection of Him at its beginning implied. And in the same way He constantly repaired to Bethany, where He found those whom God had given Him, for comfort and sympathy and rest.

This all brings out the great fact that Christ did not venture to move unless He believed God was with Him. Because of this, life cost Him constant care and thought. Only by such means was He able to see God's hand; only by them was He able to guide Himself amid all

¹ John iv. 46.

the forces which were at work in the current of events where God had placed Him. He met whom God pleased, and helped them; He went where God indicated, and acted as He believed God wished.

Now, such a rule of life as this may seem too vague for efficiency, and He who adopted it may be considered by some to have been fanciful or even presumptuous. But we must remember that, as yet, only its two main lines of application have been mentioned and none of those limitations which He who adopted it saw must be also taken as qualifying it. That the principle itself was not absolute and positive is clear from the frequent unreliableness of the disciples as authenticated persons (Peter, the anger of John, "so said they all," their jealousy of John and James, their reference to the man in Jerusalem who had been born blind, their reference to the tower in Siloam, etc.), from Christ's irregular observance of the feasts, and His peculiar use of those which He attended, and from the intrusion of the Gentiles within the practical restraints of His ministry. The question is, how could He, with such exceptions, put implicit confidence in its guidance? I reply, by seeing clearly the limitations within which it held good, or rather the facts that limited and marked its application.

We find that Christ recognised certain aids as given Him for the practical use of this principle. In the authenticated sources, whether they were persons, places, occasions, or the Word, God gave Him a true aid. The help He got from them may be called natural; but if in His desire to have every available aid to enable Him to bear the crushing sense of responsibility which some-

times, at least, came on Him, if, after all, there rested heavily upon His soul the fear lest, through weakness, ignorance, or mistake on His part, the Scripture should fail of fulfilment and men of salvation, is it unnatural to understand the supernatural knowledge imparted or the recognition given at certain crises as intended also to help Him? At His baptism He entered on His work with a sense of its greatness and of His own weakness. And in His agony in the garden, as He entered on the pathway of the Cross, what was given came evidently as the result of desire and prayer. If other occasions equally supernatural do not show the same expression of desire preceding them, at least they cannot have lacked this object. They came to lift the burdensomeness of His responsibility in regard to some step He was being led on to; for instance, in connection with the close of the Temptation and the beginning of His ministry, in connection with the decision to enter Jerusalem in triumph and to celebrate the Last Supper.

But more searching and farther reaching, yet more abiding and usual, was the other test for understanding the limits within which His system might with safety be applied, namely, the test of faith in those (authenticated or not), with whom He was brought into contact. For by it He was enabled to see whether there was opportunity for Him to work and capacity for receiving what He had to give. With it everything was possible by Him; without it, nothing. The faith might be great or small, able only to say, "Help mine unbelief," or able to extort His word of wonder, "Great is thy faith." The bruised reed He would not break; for He knew that the

faith which enabled Him to perform physical cures might be raised to that which could receive healing of the soul. And He had no wish to do the one without hope at least of the other. His power of helping was, therefore, determined in every case, not by what He could do but they could receive. He tried to find and rouse the faith of those brought to Him in God's providence; and in accordance with what He found He felt compelled to act. He had no option in the matter; the result belonged of right to their faith. "According to thy faith be it done unto thee,"¹ was all He could say. Each one got what he could receive, if not all Christ could have given.

The Saviour seems to have felt the need of this regulative test, not only because He found authenticated persons and places might fail or mislead unintentionally, but because He found they might prove false or mislead intentionally. The case might be very different from such an innocent one as that of the barren fig tree, or such a harmless one as His own mistaken application of the general principle, that a prophet has no honour in his own country; it might be such a terrible one as the surrender to the devil's purpose of what ought to be in God's hand. Christ found, at the very outset of His career, that the Messianic purpose in His heart, and the new purpose of the Spirit in Him, must be protected against such a fate. He saw that even the Scripture might be employed falsely, not only in the devil's mouth, but in the mouth of such authorised expositors as scribes and priests. In fact, all the authenticated sources might be twisted, or even lend

¹ Matt. ix. 29.

themselves to this method. They were, therefore, in some ways, as much a means of trial as of help to Him. The help they gave at least involved real testing, and came only to His proven worth. One sees this in His mother when she would have continued to treat Him as only her son; or in the Pharisees, when they came to Him with friendly professions during the great Peræan journey; or in the rulers, by questions more or less captious and difficult; or in the people, as they sought a sign from heaven, or lent themselves to merely secular though Messianic movements. So disciples like John and Peter lent themselves really, if unwittingly, to Satan's ends, and revealed the wrongness of these by the want of that faith which was the only method of life tolerated by anyone possessed of the epourania. In fact, nothing but the power which enabled Christ by constant watchfulness to protect Himself enabled Him as the Good Shepherd to watch over them. "Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not."¹ His brethren lent themselves to the same process when they tried to get Him to declare Himself and do miracles publicly at the feast in Jerusalem.² He knew, and understood, and watched Judas and Caiaphas by this same test.

The method of Christ's life was thus intensely trying. The constant need of faith and of perfect self-control rendered it terribly difficult. His method was unworldly, but it needed for success a highly trained and fully developed equipment in the person, as well as extra-

¹ Luke xxii. 32.

² John vii. 3 ff.

ordinary watchfulness in practice. Simple as it looks, the sensitiveness and submissiveness involved rendered it difficult to a degree, far more so than that human and more attractive method, which recommended the taking of law into one's own hand, and attacking, as might seem best to one's own self, the enemy's position. Christ felt the enemy and the work were first and most of all God's, and must be always treated as such.

It is quite evident, then, that whatever self-restraint and submission and patience the life of faith implied for Christ was something different far from carelessness and easy-going security ; in fact, it was the very opposite of that. His conception of this method, however, was nothing fanciful, or ideal, or unpractical, although the method was so unusual. Nor was His conception of it abstract, obscure, or unintelligible. The whole was simply the result of believing actually in God as a real presence and power and friend, of the resolve to do nothing in life but what was according to His will. The scrupulous care which this method implied might not have suited men who desired mere worldly success, but it suited Christ because it was right and in accordance with His spiritual aim. True, it involved Him in trial and controversy, because it ran contrary to all the usual ways of life ; but it exacted far more of Him by the constant tax it implied on His spiritual manhood. As I have already said, constant submission to God's will had to be combined with constant and equally unprejudiced watchfulness for it ; delicacy of perception and readiness of response to duty had to go hand in hand with sensitiveness to all imposture. Then the considerateness

needed in daily dealing with His disciples, say in announcing His death, lest it should crush them by its unexpected terrors, and the firmness needed on His part to force them to listen, and to keep it ringing in their ears till they believed in it, as well as the balancing of parties all unchangeably hostile to Him, that the end might be prevented till the right time, and then might take place; how delicate, difficult, trying it all was! What constant care in view of popularity, what anxieties, all to be borne by faith and yielded up in prayer, as He considered what was best in the circumstances, and wondered which was the right path for Him to choose that He might come to the right end! What matchless skill in reading human character He acquired thus, what marvellous power to meet in keen-edged debate fully prepared enemies, and what wonderful deftness in mapping out the way into which providence was leading Him. The outer difficulties of His life are only a pale reflection of His inner trials and correspondingly great strength. We can have some idea of it all by His prayerfulness.

This shows us what the cost was. The Saviour felt deeply His need of God, for He saw the possibilities of a future He could not meet in His own strength. Mark Him when He is going to take a step forward, or about to enter on a new stage of His work. There is no special revelation to guide Him; then conscience must commit its decision to God. He must act in faith. So it was He felt Himself authorised to leave Capernaum, in order to evangelise the rest of Galilee;¹ so He was able to send away the multitudes,

¹ Mark i. 38.

who would fain have made Him king;¹ so He was guided to choose His apostles, as the evangelising of the land became plainly more than He was fit for personally;² and so He could accept His death, and proclaim it as a thing now rising full orb'd above the horizon.³ What a character was developed, and with what perfect strength! Humility and submission and patience all went hand in hand with conscientiousness and self-denial and intellectual perception.

But, with all these difficulties and limitations, this method, which produced such a character in Him and such results by Him, had its compensations. He relied on and submitted Himself wholly to God; consequently He was entitled to expect that God would not fail Him or cast Him off; and specially that God would give Him aid in any emergency into which the method He used might lead Him. Faith in God entitled Him, as it entitles all others who live by it, to expect God's aid; for God can never allow Himself to become less than men can honestly expect Him to be. As truly as the disciples in the storm knew they were entitled to expect Christ's aid because He had led them into the difficulty, so truly did Christ Himself feel entitled to claim His Father's help whenever the circumstances of His mission rendered it necessary. He trusted God, but would not tempt Him. He saved Himself by timely precautions from the rulers of Jerusalem, and by departure from the hatred of Herod; but He refused to create bread to allay His own hunger, and accepted death when it became clear as God's will. Yet, whenever He was led

¹ Mark vi. 46.² Luke vi. 12.³ Matt. xvi. 1, 3.

into a situation where nothing but a miracle could relieve His need without disgrace, He unhesitatingly and plainly calculated upon it. So it was with even the first venture of such faith at the marriage in Cana; at Jerusalem, where He was naturally enough committed to take His stand and to act symbolically; and at Nazareth, when they would have cast Him over the brow of the hill. So it was when multitudes followed Him spite of all precautions, and had to be fed lest they should faint by the way. So it was when His disciples appealed to Him in the storm on the lake, when demoniacs sprang up in the synagogues suddenly, when Jairus, or the rulers of Capernaum, or the sisters of Bethany, or His disciples who had failed to cure, or the father of the child requiring cure, appealed to Him in public; when cases of desperate need were brought and cast down at His feet, or when He found it written and to be fulfilled, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and riding upon a colt the foal of an ass."¹ One can see what a constant and varied strain His faith had to bear; not only how strong the faith was, but how well it was warranted; in fact, that it was sure of the God it rested on. The help of God was guaranteed by His living for God, and by the service He was rendering to God. After a very real fashion, therefore, Christ did not need to consider results. His own teaching as to anxiety and care is the fruit of His own experience. Sometimes He forgot results altogether in His eagerness and zeal for the work, as when His mother waited to speak to Him whilst He taught in a crowded house after

¹ Matt. xxi. 5.



a long day's work ;¹ and sometimes He ignored results altogether, as when He expelled the temple merchants,² or when He healed a man with a withered arm in a synagogue, though the scowling faces of some present warned Him of the trap laid for Him ;³ as when He faced a Galilean ministry from which He had no expectations,⁴ or events leading assuredly to a death from which His whole being recoiled.⁵

The sanity and rightness of the whole method in the hands of a character perfectly balanced is made clear in this, that it never led to presumption, yet never left Him who followed it without the aid which it could give and He required. Christ never expected God to do for Him what He could do for Himself. He never provoked any persons needlessly. He would go to Jerusalem without or with disciples, He would send messengers before His face or remain in the wilderness, take precautions for safety or yield Himself up, as God willed. He had but to follow God's will, as that was made plain to Him. He had to leave Himself wholly in His Father's hands and be loyal. Controversy, private preferences, and active methods were excluded from His life. What God willed came to Him, and what God willed He did. God filled Christ's life with what He pleased ; and Christ accepted that, as the surest way towards His Father's aim. The bulk of Christ's life was determined for Him ; it came independently of His choice. His love tied His hands. He was helpless, that we might be helped. He saved others, Himself He could not save.

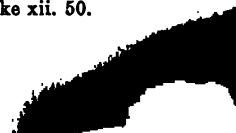
¹ Luke viii. 20.

⁴ John iv. 44.

² Matt. xxi. 12.

³ Luke vi. 6, 11.

⁵ Luke xii. 50.



CHAPTER X

CHRIST'S PLAN

It seems beyond doubt that Christ regulated His life by faith, and that by faith He chose its method. He did not go forth to seek men, seeing He believed the fitting ones would be brought to Him in the ordinary course of providence. We have found that He had His own tests for recognising these, and that in dealing with them He looked for guidance from God. The great bulk of His life was therefore, as we have seen, filled with what cannot be said to have been of His choosing.

However, one cannot read His life without feeling that this rule does not hold good universally in it, and that though it applies to the bulk of His life, it not only fails, but fails on occasions when one might have thought it most likely to apply. At what may be called the crises of His life—if not in them only, yet in them most markedly—Christ, whatever was the guidance which determined Him, takes the step forward positively, and even with assurance. If the bulk of the detail of His life was determined for Him without wish or interference of His own, the main line of His life was the result of His own decisions. In the more

important events of His life, those on which it turned, Christ was not led blindly any more than driven, was not a mere tool but an active agent, with free, consenting will, and active, regulative effort. His life was not altogether plastic, for that would have meant mere weakness; its main lines were certainly determined by His own action. Thus, if the former chapter might be looked on as setting forth the flesh and blood, the filling up and detail of the Saviour's life, this one has to consider its bones or framework. As we examine that, we shall see Christ's patient self-restraint meant the maximum of power, and was the companion of the greatest, clearest, surest resolution. His will was equally strong to act or to wait.

We must remember that sometimes Christ seems to have acted of His own initiative when really He did not. For instance, when He called Levi,¹ He did so through being brought into providential contact with him. On the other hand, though He sought Philip ere Philip even knew of Him,² He acted on what, as we saw, was special supernatural guidance. There are one or two other cases of a similar kind, but none great in themselves, or at least lying in the line of His death. For instance, Christ prompted Peter to launch out when the great take of fishes was to be given;³ for the empty nets suggested to His mind, as a providential idea, the way in which the fishermen-followers might be led to become fishers of men. When He suggested to His disciples the crossing of the lake, it was on the one occasion to escape overwork,⁴ and

¹ Mark ii. 14.

³ Luke v. 3, 4.

² John i. 43.

⁴ Luke viii. 22.

on the other to keep His disciples away from the bread-fed multitudes and their earthly Messianic ideas.¹ When He sought out the once blind man in Jerusalem, it was, we are expressly told, because He had heard that the rulers had cast that person out of the synagogue.² There were, therefore, special reasons, such as those indicated in the last chapter, for modifying the general method in these cases. For Christ always shows that He regarded the ordinary intelligence which God had given Him as a real means of guidance. His movements were not formal, or determined by mere laws, but easy, natural, spiritual, well-balanced, unerring. Laws did not cramp Him; they were not above Him. Like the Bible, they were to Him absolute, but not final. He moved easily among them; they were in His hand, He was not in theirs.

There is, however, another class of events, quite different from these comparatively unimportant ones, and in it we shall see the marked volition of the Saviour. The events in it were of the greatest moment; they formed the turning-points in the Saviour's life; nay, they were such that, as He Himself saw, they carried with them the shaping of His future. For Christ shows uniformly in connection with them that He is fully conscious of what is at stake, and that He is guiding events towards a great end. From the first it is clear that He is directing His life to gain a great purpose. To see this one has only to look at the resolution to go up to Jerusalem with His new-found disciples shortly after His ministry had begun, or the calling

¹ Matt. xiv. 23.

² John ix. 35.

and sending forth of His disciples, or the third journey and visit to Jerusalem, or the raising of Lazarus, or the determination of His own death and its details. What is most important, however, is to observe that the object is ever the outcome of His Messiahship in death. When one examines this class of cases, one finds that, though He kept steadily doing God's will, He anticipated death must come in order to gain salvation, and had for such an end accepted the idea of death. We may say, then, that though the question of Christ's life was His Messianicity, the regulative principle in His own eyes was His death, or, what was virtually its counterpart, His rejection by the Jews. If He had, as I think He had, for an endowment previous to the beginning of His ministry, the knowledge expressed in the epourania of the third chapter of John's Gospel, then to use it as a guiding star was only to live in loyalty to conscience or by faith. As He Himself put it,—and must have felt as well as recognised it,¹—"the Son of Man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined."

Two things at least are clear in regard to this class of instances, one at the beginning, and the other at the end of His career; the one in connection with His first visit to Jerusalem, and the other in connection with the determining of His own death.

At His first official journey to the holy city, even if that were undertaken in the exhilaration of having new-found followers and newly-exercised miraculous gifts, Christ made His claim formally, and, by means of the

¹ Luke xxii. 22.

temple cleansing, threw down the gauntlet. Besides, as John shows us, the Saviour on that occasion not only gauged the people's feelings, but the rulers' condition; nay, He both anticipated and challenged the result of the struggle as one to the death; for He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;"¹ and this, says the author, His disciples came by Divine guidance to know referred on His part to the temple of His body. That it might be seen how He maintained the same attitude even when the end was close at hand, and when He knew it to be near, He repeated the act, and met the official demand for a statement of His authority to do it, although that had to be done in such a way as meant sure death. On the subject of a right worship of God, such as should be in the line of the Old Testament, He openly differed from the rulers altogether and always, made the introduction of it His great aim, and was from the first willing to seal His testimony to it by His blood.

Let us now look at the other matter. The Saviour did not merely die a martyr death at the hands of men whom He could not resist; He determined His own death. He regarded it as the right ending of His life. What He Himself had said was proved true: "No man taketh My life from Me; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from My Father";² "I lay down My life for the sheep";³ "I lay down My life, that I may take it again."⁴ Now, whilst I say that Christ determined His

¹ John ii. 19, 21.

³ John x. 15.

² John x. 18.

⁴ John x. 17.

own death, I do not mean that His general plan of life from the first necessitated it, or that He merely acted so that it could not but take place; I mean that He determined the fact and ruled its detail, that He could have avoided death if He could so have willed it, and that His death would not have taken place when it did if He had been altogether passive or had had different conceptions of it from what He had. For instance, He must have known what the effect of the resurrection of Lazarus would be, for even the disciples saw it; yet He did not keep back. The rulers, as often before, sought to kill Him, but their wish had become confessed; and they aimed at gaining their object before the feast, because, with many of the people on His side, there was danger of an uproar if they did not carry out their purpose till later. To avoid them and delay it He went to Ephraim, and nightly thereafter retired to Bethany. The Gospels expressly put Christ's open statement of the date of His death before the final meeting of the rulers which decided on it: "Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests," etc.¹ Judas "sought opportunity to deliver Him unto them,"² but the Saviour retarded him from obtaining it before the feast, by the expedient of sending some of His disciples to a nameless man's house, to prepare for celebrating the passover; then He hurried the traitor on to it, when the time had come, by goading him with love, and afterwards by sending him from the supper-table with direct permission. The agony in the garden shows us how

¹ Matt. xxvi. 2, 3.

² Matt. xxvi. 16.

vividly Christ realised the nearness of the end and its moral necessity, but also that He had no thought of its physical necessity. We read, "Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners,"¹ and "Behold, he that betrayeth Me is at hand. And straightway, while He yet spake, cometh Judas."² To him, notwithstanding an inherent power evidently able to command even legions of angels at will by a word, He yielded Himself, saying, "I am He. If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way."³ He gave Himself up, allowed Himself to be bound, and went with them. His death, therefore, was more than a mere protest. It was willing on His part; wherefore nothing but a positive and worthy object to be gained could justify it.

We must face, then, as the result, these two facts: viz. that Christ contemplated, from the time of His first official visit to Jerusalem, the possibility at least that His struggle for the spiritual worship of God might end at the hand of the national representatives in death, though His resurrection would speedily follow; and that in the end Christ's death did not come to pass by the wrath of man, great though that was, and threatening though it had been from the first, but by His own free will. Whether, then, did Christ believe His death must come in order that His work might be finished, or did the idea of submitting to it come when the thing was really unavoidable, or practically nothing more was to be gained by it save the putting of a better face on things? Let us see.

Death was, even to Christ, not a naturally desirable

¹ Matt. xxvi. 45.

² Mark xiv. 43.

³ John xviii. 8.

thing. He bases its necessity on His Father's command ;¹ and the forgiveness He promised early, He later associated with His death, as its result.² Yet, though He accepted it, He was not shut up to it absolutely by the events around. It might at the very least have been delayed for some time by such means as had often before helped Him both in Judæa and Galilee. The Saviour was not at His wit's end for means of escape even among His own people. And, after all, there was still the crude Jewish suggestion, that He might perhaps betake Himself to the Gentiles. We are face to face, then, with the question, what was it which made the Saviour clear that His time was come, and that it was fitting He should die on that particular occasion ? Looking at the history, we observe the event with which that assurance seems to have been bound up to be the death and resurrection of Lazarus. Hence Gess suggests that this event becomes the key to the life of Christ. The Saviour, as we have seen, looked on the household at Bethany as authenticated by its love to, and its restfulness for Him ; yet we have seen as well that the narrative cannot be understood apart from some supernatural communication made to Him in connection with the event. Certainly, thereafter at least, Jesus entered on a new method of regulating matters, doing and ruling all in order that death might come when it did. Thus we may say, I think, that, from that time at least, the Saviour was quite clear He ought to die at the approaching pass-over, and ordered all the detail of His life that its end might take place on the right day. I say nothing

¹ John xiv. 31.

² Matt. xxvi. 28.

meantime about what induced Him to fix on a pass-over season; I only point out that He determined that special passover as the date of His death.

We cannot fail then to recognise, after Lazarus died, a distinct purpose in Christ as to His own death. Accordingly we must now go back to look at Christ's state of mind upon this subject at an earlier period. Let us ask what it was during His Peræan ministry, which preceded the great miracle on Lazarus.

We see very clearly during that period the results of the third visit He had made to the great city.¹ We see traces of depression and of excitement alternating; there was a deep, overclouding conviction of His doom, now attracting and now repelling Him, moving Him to send out seventy disciples to overtake the district in time, and causing Him to dally on the way, as one would have thought needlessly. On the other hand, we find Him aware that the date of His death was not to be of His fixing, though He saw it to be nearer than ever. And He knew it must take place in the capital, where prophets and righteous men had of old suffered. "Behold," He said, in His answer to the Pharisees when they said Herod sought to kill Him,² "Behold, I cast out devils, and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day" (that is, in a short time) "I am perfected. Howbeit I must go on My way to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." Of course the perfecting which He expected to come by means of His death could hardly mean the

¹ John vii. 14.

² Luke xiii. 32, 33.

attainment of spiritual perfection, seeing He claimed sinlessness and even more than sinlessness. He must have meant that the work of His life as Messiah could be accomplished only by His death.

His hasty visit to Jerusalem during this Peræan work,¹ shortly after that earlier (or third) one in which He had experienced a most markedly adverse and stormy reception, must indicate that He did not go simply to see if at this new feast matters were the same as before, but rather to sustain the ferment and bring it to a crisis; not, therefore, with the expectation that matters would end at this feast of the dedication. Besides, there was no sign of actual betrayal as yet, and that was to Him a finger-post. As He said,² "The Son of Man goeth, even as it is written of Him: but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born." It was not for lack of hatred on the part of the Jewish rulers that His death did not take place at this earlier feast; only the Saviour did not see fit yet to give Himself into their hands. He did not see that His time had come. The mere wrath of man was not enough; He could avoid that at any time; He needed to see His Father's will in the matter first. He certainly made such plain confession of Himself that they desired to kill Him;³ "but He went forth out of their hand. And He went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John was at the first baptizing, and there He abode." This He did though all through He was clear that "the Son of Man shall be delivered

¹ John x. 22.² Mark xiv. 21.³ John x. 23, 24, 39, 40.

unto the chief priests and the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles, and they shall mock and scourge and crucify Him: and after three days He shall rise again." ¹ These particulars—of which He showed nothing but assurance—were not gained, nor perhaps the general knowledge of the date which is indicated, by supernatural means; but at least the certitude which authorised positive co-operation came, as we have seen, afterwards, specially and directly from heaven.

Where He got that impression of the nearness of His death which created such a ferment in Him is not far to seek. It was unavoidably roused by the treatment accorded Him just before at the feast of tabernacles. As we saw, His going up to Jerusalem at that time was not directly for the sake of the feast. He seems, in fact, to have taken little part in it; though He was active throughout that part of it at which He was present. For He intentionally came up late, and then waited behind; He proclaimed Himself officially on the great day, yet waited behind to see the state of matters, after the excitement of the crowded city had died down. John selects his facts to bring out these points. He represents the Saviour as speaking on the very first day of His appearance like one whose life was threatened, if not doomed, and that for some time past. In that way the people soon recognised Him as the worker of the miracle at Bethesda; for it had given rise, or at least definite shape, to this aim against Him. "Why seek ye to kill Me? . . . are ye wroth with Me because I made a man every whit whole

¹ Mark x. 33, 34.

on the Sabbath? . . . Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this He whom they seek to kill?"¹ Thus at His introduction Christ connected the various parts of His ministry in the capital; He showed He had not lost sight of the past, but was looking on the different sections as forming a united whole.

On the great day of the feast He made His public profession, and challenged their verdict about Him as the Christ. This left them embittered but divided. Hence, after all was calmed down, He tested their state, when it became clear that the hatred was keen and implacable, not merely due to religious prejudices roused in connection with the feast. It culminated in an attempt to stone Him,² and in expelling from the synagogue the blind man who had confessed Him.³ The Saviour seems to have been disappointed in finding hatred so general and deep rooted, and consequently to have been at first depressed at the immediate view opened out, until He surmounted it by faith, and became roused in taking action which must daily make the state of matters more adapted for the closing scene.

It is worth noting that Christ's visits to the capital were viewed by Him as forming a connected ministry, apart from anything He did in the rest of the land. The work in Galilee had not the same primary importance in His eyes; it was in some sense a thing distinct; though there are evident signs of a desire upon His part to overtake the evangelising of the whole of that district. Provisionally what He did in Galilee was part of His life's work, of course; in its own way and


¹ John vii. 19, 23, 25.

² John viii. 59.

³ John ix. 35.

place it contributed towards bringing about the death which He met. But it was not part of the main line of events by which He guided His life. That connected itself unmistakably with Jerusalem. Whatever love the Saviour entertained for Galilee and Nazareth, He had an affection for Jerusalem which many passages show to have been intense. In it were blended pity and desire, as well as the respect due to hallowed associations and authoritative symbolism. His burning words of regret show us the pent-up feelings which had existed from the first. And similar emotions display themselves alike on the Cross and in the Resurrection. Of course some will say that Christ must have had hope, at least to begin with, that He would win the city, else such feelings at the end, when disappointment came, could not have been possible. On the other hand, it seems that His loving, earnest grace would agonise the more to save its people, as He saw the work they were—many of them in blindness—setting themselves to do. There can be little doubt that Christ expected, or at least sought hard to find, some mellowing of the hatred felt for Him after His return from the prolonged Galilean ministry ; but, though disappointed in this, His heart only the more loved those hating Him, only loved them more than when seeking to find in them the signs of some response.

Our views as to His belief about His own death will become clearer if we go back further and examine the earlier part of His life. His third visit to Jerusalem revealed an embitterment which meant death as soon as opportunity offered ; but we must remember that, long ere He reached the city on that occasion, He had stated



His views plainly about His end, and in words which imply no doubt as to the fact, or its nearness and terrors. Perhaps from the time of this visit it became clearer in detail, as certainly it became more continuously real; but long before that it was perfectly real, and has been faced quite decisively.

Christ's ministry in Galilee began only after He found His Father excluding Him from Peræa, where He had been baptizing, and from Jerusalem, where He had proclaimed Himself. God's hand pointed Him homewards. Samaria came only as a passing incident in the way. But He went north, knowing and even saying frankly that He had no more hope of success in His own land than in His own town. There was in Him the natural desire to help His people; and when other doors were closed, love, even if far from hopeful, did not despise this opportunity. There was all the difference possible between knowing there could be no complete success, and finding out in the bitter course of actual experience how much that really meant. The people were not like those of Jerusalem; their religious ideas were formed as much by the synagogue as by the temple. Thus, different methods of dealing with them were advisable, and a different class of truths had to be taught. But though Jesus laboured earnestly in Galilee, because He thought God wished Him to work there, and after what He thought the fittest way for it, His eyes were ever on Jerusalem, and it was His destination.

Christ's work in the north may be divided into two parts, marked with sufficient accuracy by the great confession at Cæsarea Philippi. In the former there was

comparatively little mention of His death. The specific work in which He was engaged was that of evangelising the district, and then out of that securing fellow-workers to complete the evangelisation. That clearly implied the necessity of silence as to His death, till other and preliminary subjects had been dealt with, and the way had been prepared for it. He had first to rouse the country, and cut the outlines of great impressions deep in the hearts of those who were to be His followers; then He needed to add teaching for both the crowds and the disciples; after which there came out the fact of capacity in the latter and incapacity in the former to recognise His mission. The use of miracles for the first of these objects He was led into providentially; but He never relied on them as the highest and surest means to His end, being clear, as He had been in Jerusalem, that they were liable to much abuse, and apt to hinder rather than to help. He tried prudently to restrain excess, and rule their use for the best ends; for He saw that by them the ecclesiastical position was accentuated, that His death was being hastened, and His freedom of speech meantime hindered. To preaching He applied Himself ardently; He used His miracles for its ends. He accepted, as part of His life's work in God's eyes, the evangelising of Galilee; even as afterwards He accepted that of the whole land so far as possible. "I must preach the good tidings to the other cities also: for therefore am I sent,"¹ He said. He preached from Capernaum as a centre, in towns and synagogues, with the evident intention of overtaking the whole district, and

¹ Luke iv. 43.

influencing all classes of the community. To multiply His presence and to create less excitement He sent forth His apostles; and He set forth His own teaching in parables, that those who were ill-intentioned might find no cause of offence in that by which they could not profit. Yet that did not imply less work; He worked harder as He saw the difficulty and greatness of His task. He became careless of Himself; and women set themselves to care for Him. The difference between the disciples and the people soon showed itself as the outcome of His new form of teaching. This Christ found out at Cæsarea Philippi. Along with the knowledge of this separation of view in His audience, there came at the same time news of the death of John the Baptist. Everything combined to give significance to that great event. By it the Saviour felt He had turned a corner, and come in full view of His death. If the forerunner—more acknowledged than Himself—was so treated, then much more Himself. The forerunner was now out of the way; His own day had begun; His time was come. They had done to John what they listed, and even so were they sure to do to the Son of Man.¹ Soon, too, rather than late; for if mere enthusiasm, like Herod's for John, or that of the multitudes of Jerusalem and later of Galilee for Himself, meant so little, His appearance in the capital might well be the signal for the bitterness of a party to convert excitement into prejudice. Still John's execution does not seem to have told the Saviour for the first time of what His end would be, but rather to have brought it

¹ Matt. xvii. 12.

into the field of practical realities, liable to come at any moment in the near future. As long as John lived Christ appears to have felt John's existence a barrier between Him and the end. His forerunner's work was not finished; and His own end—the completion of His own work—could not come before that. It was for this reason that He seems to have felt constrained to sum up the first part of the training of the apostles, and to find out the state of Galilean opinion by the questions to which I have adverted. "From that time,"¹ as we are expressly told, He formally and frequently thrust on the attention of His followers the fact of His approaching end. Not popularity, but the Cross, filled His gaze when He looked onwards. "They . . . passed through Galilee."² . . . For He taught His disciples, and said unto them" (this is evidently its epitome), "the Son of Man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and when He is killed, after three days He shall rise again."

There seems little doubt, then, that from this time forward Christ's death was quite clear to Him. The question is, now, whether we are to believe the matter was clear at an earlier date. As John's Gospel tells us³ (referring chap. vii. to the end of chap. v.), "After these things," at His second visit to Jerusalem, "Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews sought to kill Him." That describes the fact we have already seen to have become widely known among the people of the city by the time of the Saviour's third visit. But Jesus Himself had spoken of it, when He

¹ Matt. xvi. 21.

² Mark ix. 30, 31.

³ John vii. 1.

told John's disciples about the effect which the taking away of the Bridegroom would have on His friends' hearts.¹ And the genuineness of that saying is attested by the similar saying found even earlier on the lips of the Baptist. In fact, the whole subject seems to have been in the Saviour's thoughts at the time; for there was no absolute necessity of introducing the subject into His reply. Nay, there was no need to add the two illustrations which are given, the second of which at least makes plain that the peculiarity of Christ's mission was His removal, for that was to make it unlike all which preceded, and no mere patch upon the past. That the thought must have been familiar by this time to the Saviour comes out in connection with His knowledge of its details. He knew not only the fact but its means—betrayal; He knew not only the deed but the person through whom it would take place.² He was clear as to the traitor, if not from the beginning of His ministry or earlier, then at least from the time the man had met Him or had become a disciple.

It is a very weak explanation which tries to account for the origin of Christ's knowledge in regard to His death by merely natural causes. To deny the passage in regard to the Bridegroom and His friends is not to get rid of it, but to confess its inconvenience. To assert that Christ's views as to His kingdom swayed back and forwards, and wavered during the earlier half of His Galilean ministry, because He hoped for an outward expression of His kingdom in His own time, is to mistake the character of His claim, and so of His

¹ Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 29.

² John vi. 70, 71.

teaching; for if He began His ministry—as will hardly be denied—with spiritual views of the kingdom, views quite unlike those of His contemporaries, there is no departure from His ideal either in holding that it had come and existed in His own person, or that it had been existent since John's day,—the violent taking it by force,¹—or that it had diffused itself invisibly, so that “the kingdom of God is within you”² (or, in your midst). It was known on the guarantee of Spirit-wrought miracles;³ it was shaping itself in the person of His followers; and after what He had seen in Jerusalem, and expected to find in Galilee, He could not have thought the whole country was going to flock into it. No doubt Christ sometimes spoke of His kingdom as in heaven and sometimes as on earth, sometimes as spiritual and sometimes as outward; but, whilst both may have been true, the statements not being mutually exclusive, we can easily explain the seeming difficulty, and find in it rather support of its genuineness from the peculiar habit which we have already seen marked Christ, of seeing the two sides of a thing, the one by which it looked heavenwards, and the other by which it appeared earthwards. Thus not only do I think Baldensperger's idea about Christ's changeableness and wavering of view on the subject of His kingdom quite unwarranted, but I cannot agree with Wendt's, who, denying essential change in Christ's idea of His kingdom, denies also His original or early knowledge of His death.

It is, of course, still more absurd to argue, on the mis-

¹ Matt. xi. 12.

² Luke xvii. 20, 21.

³ Matt. xii. 28.

taken basis of changeable ideas, that the Saviour, being disappointed, transferred the hope of realising the kingdom on to the end of the world, or, as it seemed to Him, to a period after His death. For even if that were true, and its foundation trustworthy, it would only make clear that Christ expected the kingdom to come after, and not by means of, His death. Now how could that have authorised Him to die? Death might have brought Him comfort, if it had been either compulsory or natural, but how could mere surrender to death do so? How could this situation, in which He was placed, have authorised Him to get rid of life, to encourage and to play into the hands of those who wished to take it, instead of resisting them? Nay, how could it have authorised Him to lead others into the same difficulty as Himself, as when, for instance, the end was clear in connection with the death of Lazarus, and matter-of-fact but loving Thomas, sensible and clear sighted, said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him"?¹ Do you think that Christ was afraid of what they could face bravely, specially if in His case some hope was attached to it? But, after all, what of the vague hope supposed to be associated with this most unwarrantable line of action? It cannot be that becoming "a ransom for many"² is the same as getting out of the way, because the kingdom could not come whilst He was on earth. That were to represent the Saviour as looking on Himself in the light of an obstacle to His kingdom, and not its means; as mistaking His own limitations, and the difficulties they entailed, for the obstacles sin presented; as forgetting His own great ideas,

¹ John xi. 16.² Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45.

taught by the leaven and the mustard seed and the law, "he knoweth not how." Then the Incarnation would be proved by the experience of the Incarnate One to have been a mistake!

Thus Christ's knowledge of His own death is forced back to the beginning of His Galilean ministry. But even there several indications point to it as having existed at a still earlier date. That the statements should not be so clear or so numerous is natural. Christ, as we see, did not teach all He knew, but only what was fitting. He did not begin to teach the fact of His death when His popularity had collapsed, as if He were trying to save Himself from the disgrace by predicting it. The remembrance of it had not been suggested by popular hatred, for He announced it formally when His popularity was at its height. But He spoke of it to outsiders only when necessity arose, or the matter was brought vividly before Him; whilst to His followers He spoke of it only after He had prepared their mind by other truths. Accordingly, if we look to an earlier date, even though we set aside, because of its vagueness, the saying at Cana, "Mine hour is not yet come," we find that He was perfectly aware of the hatred of the rulers and the uncertainty of popular favour whilst He was on His first visit to Jerusalem. We even find that He was not unprepared so early for the contingency of a violent death, and was sure of its result. He was never deceived as to the watchful hatred of the Pharisees, either when with John in Peræa,¹ or during His earlier Galilean ministry.² And His second official visit to the holy city,

¹ John iv. 1 ff.

² Mark ii. 16, 25.

in which He appealed specially rather to the poor and needy than to people in general as before, made the bitterness of the hatred entertained toward Him plain, and the length to which it was prepared to go in expressing itself clear beyond mistake. How it impressed itself on Him we saw when looking at His third visit to Jerusalem.

To go back to a still earlier period: it seems to me that that part of the Temptation which set before the Saviour all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and offered them as the reward of worship to Satan, or of the acceptance of them at his hand, failed largely of its point, if it did not rest on the tacit assumption that here was an easier way to His object than by the suffering of death. The worship of the devil was a large demand, whilst glitter was a poor bait, totally inadequate in the case of a spiritual soul—a combination quite absurd as a temptation, if the method of suffering in soul for sin were not presupposed. Christ's baptism was not enlightenment so much as strengthening; and the Temptation was the testing of His new-found strength. It is not enough to admit that from the first Christ saw that sorrow must await Him, and that as events advanced and the Cross loomed up, He arrived at the conviction that it was the inevitable goal for all who were loyal to God, and specially for the Messianic King. If we deny to Christ the consciousness from the first of His coming death, we strip Him of the agony of the resolve which He upheld all the way, and look on Him as forced in the end to accept unavoidably, or to prevent confessed failure, what He accepted cheerfully and bore patiently from first to last.

At every step forward in the great line of His life, the Saviour acted with full view of the end, and freely, in order to gain it. His death, as God willed, was all His plan. His life, as God willed, was all His will. He guided His life for the end, as God made events plain; He left God to fill up His life as God would ere He took it back. The regulative idea of the Saviour's life was from the first and throughout all His ministry, His death—the death He died. It was all His plan.

Now, of course, to all this there is the very natural objection that such a conscious future would render wholly unnatural the life this person led. I can only say that there is no sign of that in Christ's case. From the first moment He gave any evidence of thought about death He associated with it the idea of resurrection, further on supplemented by that of loving service, and finally even of highest service for man. At first it lay far off. He was impressed by it only as He went on, but more and more; because it was one thing even for Him to know a truth in theory, and quite another to behold it near, or to experience it practically. His boyhood was not spoiled, or the development of His human mind, by the consciousness of divinity. He was not old before His time. There was neither pride nor morbid brooding in Him. There was no crushing load of responsibility or fear till strength came proportionately. There was no constant cloud obscuring His young life, but an unmatched joy in the beauties of nature as shown in bracing, breezy, sunshiny, Palestinian uplands. Life added its interests to those of nature.

These, although trying, were strong, even overwhelming, in their attractions. His own experience was "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." He gradually saw the future more clearly, even as He saw the barren fig tree better by coming nearer to it. Only God's moral laws knew no exceptions; they were not fallible, like His physical ones. Christ was never blind to the end, but He became clearer as to its detail, and gradually found out all it involved. At first, when He spoke of His death, He spoke of it by the resurrection it involved. In the springtime of hope the one bulked more largely in His eye than the other did. A further stage is seen when He represented to Nicodemus the necessity which exists on men's part, not only for death, but the death that must be His: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. . . . For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,"¹ etc. There is a new and additional joy mentioned, when He spoke of the feeling which the Bridegroom's presence brings to His people, and knew that their sorrow for His loss would become the measure of the joy which should pour in on them at finding Him again. The great cycle of statements, beginning at Cæsarea Philippi after the execution of John the Baptist, marks the era when darkness began by reason of the conscious approach of the dread event. There was repeatedly temptation to avoid it, and continuous anxiety till it came. The gloom deepened towards the end of the Peræan journey, and presaged Gethsemane. From the time of Lazarus' resurrection,

¹ John iii. 14.

and of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the positive action which the Saviour felt entitled to take seems to have done away largely with the excited, yet gloomy mood, which had marked the journey south. At the passover table He found a joy He had long desired—the joy of being able to look on His work as practically finished, and as secured in its results. At it He could give thanks even for occupying the position He did, and for being able to give His people the pledge He was offering them. Having made submission of will, He was able to go forth and give Himself up in the assurance that He would rise shortly and meet His disciples in Galilee.

One cannot fail to see that in all the great events lying in the line of, and leading up to, the Saviour's death, He was personally active, and that He determined, by positive decisions of His will, the shape they took. He lived with the end in view from the first, and latterly at least acted in order to it.

CHAPTER XI

SOME OF THE MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRIST AS A MIRACLE WORKER

It is probable that most persons regard Christ's miracles as the result of His divinity. They think of these as done with the ease of Divine power and by the mere utterance of a creative fiat. They are under the impression that Christ's mighty works cost Him nothing; they even wonder why, when that is the case, He did not do more of them.

Such persons forget that if these works had been the result of Christ's divinity they must have been impossible to His disciples. He could not in that case have transferred His power. They forget that Christ rested on the fact of His doing miracles by the Holy Spirit as undeniable evidence that the kingdom of God had come, and that, both in the synagogue at Nazareth¹ and in the reply to John's messengers,² the Saviour identified His gracious power of working miracles, like His gracious power of preaching the gospel, with the express gift of the Holy Spirit. We are therefore shut up to the conclusion that these works were His as a dependent being, that they were part of His real human

¹ Luke iv. 18.

² Matt. xi. 4.

life, not easy to Him, but the fruit of a life which cost Him much care. They were not, however, in that case, the result of a mere general benevolence, which had found a cheap way of indulging its tastes; Christ in His dependence could not use this power according to whim, just as He could not leave it unused, or trust its application to mere chance. 'It was not intended for Himself, to make life easy, or pleasant, or glorious. It was not intended promiscuously for men at large, but for those who had faith when they came into contact with Him. The exercise of it,—ay, the continued possession of it,—therefore, not only shows His power, but His spiritual grandeur, not only His rank but His character.

We get a starting-point in examining the mental marks of Christ whilst performing His miracles, by finding a great explicative principle in a formal statement made by Him in connection with the raising of Lazarus. Jesus had gone to the grave of His friend, and at His request the stone at its mouth had been rolled away. The surrounding observers all, even Martha, seemed faithless. Then, ere the Saviour called on the dead man, He said, as He deliberately lifted up His eyes to heaven, in order that there might be no mistake about the person He addressed, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hearest Me: and I knew that Thou hearest me always;"¹ adding the explanation, "but because of the multitude which standeth around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me." Now here there is a distinct assertion that He had prayed as to this matter, and that this was only an instance of what was customary with

¹ John xi. 41.

Him in such cases—so customary, in fact, that He had no doubt God heard Him as usual, and also that He was not afraid to commit Himself to that, or to show His assurance of God's response even ere it came. That He had prayed aloud, or rather had given any indication of prayer, was evidently unusual, and formed the peculiarity of this case. It was not His ordinary practice on such occasions to pray aloud; He had altered His habit for the time, through a wish to help the bystanders into intelligent sympathy with Him and faith in God, to cut them free from any idea of the use of magic in the thing. For they had quite misapprehended Him and His delay, saying, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?"¹ They did not know that He could have done it but would not, because God was to be glorified in Him. Accordingly, He let them see by His words that He had no doubt about His power; and He let them see whence it came, that they might make no mistake as to its scope and range. The evidence was such as to enable them to see, when the miracle was accomplished, that the delay and the death were right, that the resurrection of the man was willed of God as well as desired of Christ, and that, spite of its seeming untoward results, it served in God's sight a good end, to which Christ had lent Himself. Nevertheless, we hear no prayer by Christ as He goes to the grave; in fact, but for His own express statement, we would not have suspected the presence of any. No doubt the days just before, which had been spent in

¹ John xi. 37.

delay, may have been thus employed; certainly the return to such clearly terrible consequences as He foresaw could scarcely have been determined on and carried out in any other way. But even that does not exclude the possibility of more prayer during His agony of heart as He approached the tomb.

If we turn from this case to that of the demoniac lad,¹ whom the Saviour met when He had descended from the Mount of Transfiguration, we shall find the same principle verified. The cure of the lad is an example of a hurried miracle. Christ was entering into details of the case by asking the boy's father about them; by that process He was finding out both the extent of the father's weakness and the greatness of the lad's need. Just then, however, He "saw a multitude come running together, and He rebuked the unclean spirit,"² who, after violently struggling, came out. The lad was so hurt that he seemed dead; but Jesus, having confidence in the result, took him by the hand, and raised him up. Now, though there is no sign of prayer on this occasion, and though the event was hurried, so that the time naturally to be looked for as available for offering it was shortened, we must remember that the Saviour had been much engaged in prayer just before. For when Jesus had gone on to the mount He went up to pray, and without thought of transfiguration; but "it came to pass, that as He was praying, He was transfigured before them." Now, in the circumstances, that prayer must have had reference to the future and to the world's need of His death, and even to the world's

¹ Matt. xvii. 14.

² Mark ix. 25.

need around Him and His power of meeting it, so that we may argue His prayerful condition, His prayerful state of mind as to men and their well-being, lay at the root of this cure. And, specially, we must keep in memory that this cure is that in which we have an explanation given by Jesus of the secret of His disciples' weakness, and a statement of the sources of His own power. "This kind," said He, "can come out by nothing save by prayer" (and fasting).¹ I am not concerned just now with this as showing the secret of their failure, but of His power. Leaving out of account meantime the description "this kind," it is clear that Christ relied on prayer, and seemingly not so much on a short, instant, special petition at the time, though that is not excluded, as a general state of prayerfulness and high spirituality, without which the momentary prayer would have been ineffectual.

In such miracles as Jesus performed by contact or touch—the raising of Jairus' daughter, for instance—I think we may therefore take the action to be expressive of His own assurance as to the result, and so a stimulus to or ground for the faith of the onlookers (or of the patient, as the case may be), who watched His every movement with curiosity and expectation. This explains His action in the case of the blind young man of Jerusalem whom He saved,² of the blind man at Bethsaida whose eyes He anointed and 'touched,'³ and of the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis whom He treated similarly.⁴

¹ Mark ix. 29.

² John ix.

³ Mark viii. 24, 25.

⁴ Mark vii. 33.

This last case, in which our Saviour led the man aside, and then, groaning, uttered the word Ephphatha, "be opened,"¹ also implies prayer as well as the expression of assurance. The groaning here is similar to the disturbed state of mind which marked Him at the grave of Lazarus. It was the outcome of aggravated feeling. In that case we see He began with pity, but ended in open weeping and audible groaning. Possibly it had something to do with the faithlessness of those who stood by and had misunderstood Him so sadly. And not unlikely the same explanation holds good in this case. For Christ began by leading the man aside from the multitude,² just as He prefaced His cure of Jairus' daughter by expelling the multitude of Jewish mourners, who laughed His words to scorn. He then cured this man in privacy. The groaning and the word of command would both be inaudible, and perhaps not by eye very intelligible to a deaf and dumb man. And as they were evidently not intended for a crowd, unfitted to benefit by them, the only way of giving them any intelligible and definite meaning is to understand them as the result of a prayer, and as the command of the Mediator in the name of God on any whom it might concern, on him who had faith in such measure as was possible by the eye without the ear, and by the expectation which touch roused, although without much intelligence. It is natural to associate such agony of soul with prayer in this case, since Jesus Himself does so at the grave of Lazarus. The circumstances explain the difference in Decapolis and in Bethany; the one was done in secret and the other in

¹ Mark vii. 33.

² *Ibid.*

public. On the latter occasion the momentous results of the report by eye witnesses of the miracle about to be done could not be overlooked, and were not avoided. And some of the bystanders on that occasion being true disciples, we must remember that the sign was meant for them, not, as in the other case, for the person to be wrought on. At least we shall not think that such agony of soul as was seen in the Saviour on these two occasions was the result of an unsubmissive and unprayerful, struggling spirit. Every anxiety or source of pain was to Him a cause of prayer, but of true, that is, submissive prayer. His spirit was always in a state of prayerfulness.

But further: our Saviour brings out the relation in which prayer stands to His miracles by means of the blasting of the barren fig tree. It is true that on this occasion also one does not hear of any prayer, and that in fact one sees little sign of it in the spirit of Christ as He approaches the tree, or when He reproaches it. Yet when He gives to the wondering disciples His explanation of what they had seen, He first describes the power of prayer, and then adds as its application, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."¹ So that one cannot ignore the fact that here too Christ intends us to understand prayer had been used to secure the result.

In that case, the "I will"² of Christ, uttered before men, was really the expression of assured desire toward God. It revealed His will to them, but it expressed His will to God. His "I will" before them was the result of

¹ Matt. xxi. 22.

² Mark i. 41.

an "I will" first uttered to God: "Father, I will";¹ not perhaps of one expressly and consciously offered at the moment, but of one which was the constant expression of habitual desire for men's greatest good according to the Father's will, of one in which all selfishness was utterly lost and in which guidance was secured by hourly dependence.

But prayerfulness, if it was the necessary condition in which a miracle became possible, implied the constant desire to bless others to the full, and therefore the actual and intense prayer for that whenever opportunity offered. Miracles did not spring from general goodwill any more than from a cold and unsympathetic nature. Prayerfulness was the needed condition, because it implied accordance with the will of God. Desire and prayer in at least some cases were actual elements. Prayer on such occasions meant in Him, whose will accorded with God's, not impassivity, but intensity of undivided, concentrated desire. Every miracle was the fruit of the Saviour's perfect spiritual condition, and meant tension of the severest kind on His spiritual strength. Men were healed at what, to Him, was a vast personal cost. As Peter was upheld by the strength which Christ willed into His hand when that apostle began to sink, so Jairus' daughter was raised from the dead. Christ's sympathies were deeply moved ere He performed the most of His miracles.

The Saviour seemed to require to know the person's condition, and to need to be able to put Himself in the man's place ere He could be of any use in aiding him.

¹ John xvii. 24.

His groaning at Bethsaida and at Bethany has given signs of that already ; so does the emotion which caused Him to cry, *with a loud voice*, "Lazarus, come forth." In like manner, the questions put to the father of the lad at the foot of the Transfiguration Mount, about the duration and type of his son's illness, had the same effect. So also had His question put to blind men,¹ "What will ye?" The same feeling is shown by means of the comfort and guidance with which He sought to sustain Jairus, as He went with him to heal his daughter. The fact, too, that He rose up in the boat when He quelled the storm by His word, and the further fact that, as the evangelists seem to imply,² He enumerated the elements on which He laid His command, show that He put His whole heart into the desire for the result. He emphasised His will on each of them, amid all the turmoil, though He could not concentrate His attention on the healing of Jairus' daughter, much as He sympathised with him, till the unsympathetic mourners, wholly out of touch with Him, were excluded. We see, then, that to act sympathetically He had to give His undivided attention to each case. He could not heal men in the mass, even though He was able to heal them all. He healed them one by one, and so He healed every one. He needed to love them as persons, and He could only love them and so pray for them separately. He could heal only those who came, and He could heal them only thus. His faith sought their faith by His desires, and their desires met His desires by their faith. A conscious and willing cure meant the absorption of all His interest, the yielding up

¹ Matt. xx. 32.² Mark iv. 39.

of all His attention, the application of all His power. His prayers were not merely the prayers of a prayerful being, they were as if they were the very prayers of the person for whom He prayed. He understood by His sympathy the case of many who said nothing—for instance, of the woman bound with an infirmity eighteen years but healed by Him in a synagogue. Their prayer was not needed; His was enough. This enables us to understand the case of the paralytic man let down through the roof of a house and placed at the feet of Jesus. We read that the cure came when Jesus saw the faith of the four bearers. No doubt it is difficult to see how Christ was able to do what He did for the man, specially in the forgiveness of sins, because of what He saw in them. But the key to the matter is found in that phrase—"Jesus seeing their faith saith to the sick of the palsy," etc.¹ For thereby we perceive that their act in putting the man at Christ's feet was regarded by the Saviour as a tacit appeal of their faith to Him. It was really an act of intercessory prayer. Accordingly, He could not deny its claim, but had to adopt it on the spur of the moment and make it His own, had to offer it as His and theirs. Then He was sure of the result. The shape it took was determined by the faith of the four bearers. Christ gave forgiveness that they might know it was as easy to give that as healing: "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk?" and that He preferred to give the one rather than the other.

We conclude, from the condition of prayerfulness by which Christ's harmony of will with the Father was

¹ Mark. ii. 5.

maintained, that He was really an incarnate prayer. His incarnation meant the great request; His death put it with power. One might almost say He was in His humanity an embodied prayer. For such was His condition that a desire meant a prayer, and the unchanging, though unconscious, bent of His heart was ever toward blessing men according to God's will, that is, to the greatest extent possible. There was continuous union of His will and God's, so that a command by Him was the fruit of prayerfulness, that is, of submission of will to God, or of desire for God's will to be done, and became equivalent, as it were, to God's command. His will was God's will. The expression of His will was enough for God to give effect to it.

Faith in Him derived its assurance from conviction of this great principle, and consciousness that He fulfilled all its conditions. "I do always the things that please Him." His prayer when it laid hold on God for a result was definite and irresistible. He told His own experience when He added in explanation, after the blasting of the barren fig tree,¹ "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou taken up, and cast into the sea, it shall be done." The assurance He had of the answer even ere it came, the assurance He showed when He touched in order to cure, rested on this principle, and His knowledge that He exemplified it Himself. It enabled Him not only to undertake deliberately to raise Lazarus by letting him die, but by committing Himself

¹ Matt. xxi. 20 ff. ; Mark xi. 20 ff.

to it before the dead man's sisters, and even before the disciples and the Jews. It enabled Him to pledge Himself to His disciples when He said in regard to the crowds, "They have need to go away; give ye them to eat,"¹ and then to the crowds, as He made the disciples cause them to sit down in order. This, of course, was that faith by which, as I have already pointed out, He felt warranted in looking to His Heavenly Father for help, when, by the duties of His calling, placed in circumstances in which He could not help Himself. By it He ventured on the finding of the ass's colt in order to fulfilment of the prophecy; by it, because of His disciple's ignorant indiscretion, He ventured on the prediction of the coin to be found in the fish's mouth;² and by it, because He found him in a synagogue, He ventured on healing a man whom His enemies had brought,³ though He saw it would mean another step towards death. This also makes clear the great venture which His first miracle must have meant to Him, and the assurance even then of His own perfect state, which warranted belief in the possession of such marvellous though untried power. We see no signs of any excitement raised in Him by it. Yet it was undertaken before people, ay, before His new-found disciples—impressed by His miraculous knowledge and expectant of wonders at His hand—so that we are astonished at the calm audacity of His faith, when success or failure hung thus manifestly in the balance. Perhaps the words on His mother's lips, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it," implied in His

¹ Matt. xiv. 16.² Matt. xvii. 27.³ Mark iii. 2.


view a hint of God's will, though not a human command, and, as He thought, showed that she remembered what she had forgotten, and that she spoke with a different spirit from the moment before—as a reliable guide, as a really authenticated source. This, it may be, was what made Him no longer stand by His decision, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come," but turn to the servants and command them to draw. Even then, however, her words only warranted the occasion as appropriate; His conscious right, due to His perfect spiritual condition, was what authorised Him to expect He could exercise miraculous power.

I think, then, that we may look on the Saviour's power of doing miracles as having some such explanation as this: that the Father put Himself into the Saviour's hands; that because the Saviour had proved He loved, and was loyal to the pre-eminence of, the *epourania*, and always submitted Himself to the power of the Holy Spirit, the Father held Himself at His command, and could trust Him with the exercise of all His power, so far as He saw fit to claim it. He who was wholly under the power of the Spirit was fit to use the power of the Spirit. One might at least illustrate this idea by what we see in the relation of the Syro-Phœnician woman and Christ.¹ When He saw the greatness of her faith, He gave utterance to what was, for this case, the interpretation of the wider general principle, "According to thy faith be it done unto thee," by saying, "Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt." That is to say, He put Himself wholly into her hands. To others—not, for instance, to

¹ Matt. xv. 21 ff.

a blind man only, but to His favourite disciples, as they came and through their mother begged that their hearts' desire be granted them—He said, "What wilt thou?" for He knew how imperfect and unreliable they were, and how they might have abused His promise if He had granted it; how, in fact, as matters turned out, they would have done so. Perfect faith is a faith that can be trusted wholly to exercise, with a deep sense of personal responsibility, and only according to God's will, the power given. Such faith God can trust; He puts Himself at its disposal; it deserves no less. He must not in any way fail the trust which is convinced He cannot fail, and stakes its all upon His perfectness. The power which His Father gave the Saviour was never abused, and so never withdrawn. It was neither flaunted before others, nor put above God's love, nor used for His own ends, nor denied to others who had any claim on it, that is, who were suitable for it.

We are now in a position, I think, to get light on the meaning of some of the prayers which Christ associated with His miracles. When He fed the multitudes with loaves and fishes, He first blessed the food. The act, I think, implies that He set the food apart to be a real blessing to these thousands of people, and by that not only meant to acknowledge the goodness of God as the Great Giver, but intended the provision to do more than nourish the body, designating it to gain the miraculous purpose He had already resolved on. His consecrating prayer, like His miraculous power, was real through the exercise of this faith. The same thing may be said of the prayer with which He prefaced the institution of the Lord's



Supper ; for whilst, no doubt, it contained joyful thanksgiving that He was privileged to do His work for men according to His Father's will, and would soon be able to complete that, it contained also the desire that the food used might so become the means of representing Him in His saving death, as to feed the souls of the worshippers and not their body only. These two expressions of His will in order to the glory of God show us the spiritual process which went on in the Saviour before each of His miracles, which was embodied alike in His prayerfulness and His prayers, His will, His desires, and His commands.

We may now go on to consider the case of the apostles, to whom our Saviour gave the same miraculous powers, and to whom He even made promise that they would be able to do greater things than He Himself had ever been able to achieve. When the disciples failed to expel the demon from the lad who had been brought to them at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, their Master explained to them that the difficulty they found in the matter was because "this kind cometh not out but by prayer (and fasting)." The difficulty with them, as with the father of the child, was just their lack of faith. The reference, understood by what we have already seen in the case of Christ, is evidently to their prayerlessness, and so to their unspirituality. They were in a state in which it was unfit they should have God's power. They were not fit to be trusted with it, for they had allowed themselves to get out of sympathy with the Holy Spirit. When their Master was engaged in prayer as to His death and the world's need, they were busy

wrangling with the scribes, and bent rather on the assertion of their selves, and the exhibition of their prerogative in healing the lad, than in securing or showing the glory of God. Christ was able to cure the lad, because He had the qualification and they had not. He was in fit condition ; they were not fit for such a trust. It was only right they should be put to shame, that they should be reduced to their own position—the lowest ; and He exalted to His—the highest.

But how, then, had they got this power before ? It only failed them then ; and it had never failed Christ at all. We find, to begin with, that they got this gift from Christ. He gave them authority to heal, and to cast out devils in His name.¹ Now, whatever that may imply, it implies something more than a mere declaration of their fitness for the use of it, and of their right to it. It implies dependence on Him for the gift, just as does the promise of “greater things than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father.” The Spirit which these works represented came, in whatever fulness, by Him ; He Himself had received that Spirit without measure ; and it is significant that the disciples’ failure occurred when He was absent on the mount, and they were deprived of His influence for the time. By Him came the Spirit and any fitness they possessed to exercise such power. What He had given them was no mockery, no mere matter of words. They had often exercised the power. The seventy returned from their mission rejoicing, and saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in Thy name.” But these words contain indica-


¹ Luke x. 9, 17 ; Matt. x. 1.

tion of failure in these men, ere even their short mission was ended. They had gone from His presence with prepared hearts and in His power, as their acts showed ; but in a few days, even ere they returned, they could only glory in their past, and were manifestly unable to repeat it in the present ; so that they received the well-merited rebuke, directed at their unspiritual, unbelieving condition, as the cause of all their failure—"Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." If, now, it be asked why the apostles could not cast the demon out of the lad, the answer is partly that such cases seem to have varied in difficulty, and this was indeed one of the more difficult—though it should not have presented any difficulty to them, any more than to their Master, whose name they had, and whose power they ought to have had—whose power at least lay open to them. This case was congenital ; it was stubborn even before Christ's power ; for the demon resisted, and came out only after doing the lad all the ill he could. But the answer is rather that they were spiritually degenerate and so disqualified, not merely unqualified. Their heart was not right, either in dependence on God or love to men ; they sought neither the glory of the one enthusiastically, nor the good of the other passionately. They had failed in the sense of responsibility which such a power ought to have roused in them, and so the power had been taken away lest it should be abused. The gift was lost to them for the time being at least.

The faith which should have qualified them to effect a cure was the faith which enabled others to take and

receive a cure, only more exalted and more abiding, more enlightened and more blessed. There were differences in the faith of those receiving the cure; some could say only, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief;" others, "Lord, speak the word only." Some pleaded for the body, others desired on behalf of the soul. Above all these in degree—but only in degree—was the faith found in stronger measure in those whom the Saviour chose to be His apostles. When He had educated their faith and prayerfulness into sympathy so far with Himself, and habitual use of His own methods, as well as of His own ideas, He gave them what He had brought them to, what He had fitted them for. He gave them the exercise of His own power, in trust. They could not have got it without being in some measure fitted for it; when they were unfit it disappeared. Their fitness might vary, might be greater or less, and the power might be lost as well as gained. The power belonged to all who were fit for it, who could seek and receive it, not for themselves but for others. But that fitness came only by the Holy Spirit, and only from Christ. The power came to all who had a right, but the right was given by Christ. He came not only to give power but to join others with Himself in the exercise and giving of it. Though even He could give it in no other way than—as He gave healing—where it was fit; and the fitness was in both cases faith.

We can now understand the hindrance which Christ felt in the presence of cold, or critical, or faithless persons. He was evidently as sensitive to their presence as to that of those who had faith and sympathy, and evidently



was as much hindered by the one as helped by the other. To the one He opened out as a flower does to the sun; from the other He shrank, and withdrew Himself within Himself. He took the disciples to the mount, or the apostles to the table and the garden, because He expected from them something like faith and sympathy. When He came to Jairus' house and found a scoffing though wailing people, He turned them all out before He felt freedom of spirit to concentrate His attention on the case, and fulfil to the father the expectation He had already roused. When He came to the tomb of Lazarus, and found so much faithlessness, or to Decapolis, where there was so much worldliness and lack of sympathy, He was pressed in spirit, and groaned, as He carried through His work. When the paralytic man borne of four was brought, a crowd of Pharisees and scribes and doctors of the law was present, wholly critical and full of hate. We find it recorded, as if the thing were unusual in these circumstances, that "the power of the Lord was present to heal"¹ (them). And Christ wrought His miracle; so that it seems as if He, in the interest of the others present, burst through the obstruction these men presented, as if He exerted Himself the more because of the one, and for the sake of the other, class.

The same effect was produced on Christ in a slightly different way, not easy to be understood apart from this principle. When He healed the first demon-possessed man in the synagogue of Capernaum, the remark made by the astonished crowd was, "What is this word? for

¹ Luke v. 17.

with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out!"¹ From that we see that the people were inclined to attach importance to the word He used, to think of the exercise of it as of some magical formula, like the use of the name of Beelzebub among themselves. They seem to have felt thus; though the evidence is all the other way in connection with the centurion's expression, "Only speak the word." They did not attach importance to the person who used the word, or think He gave it weight. They separated the word from Him, and looked on it as an external thing; as if it were like a thing which could be carried in the hand to be used at will. It does not seem improbable that this was the secret of the apostles' weakness. The form their low spirituality tended to take was that of looking on the name of Christ as a magical formula possessed of power without reference to moral conditions in themselves. They never thought of losing their power, just as they never thought of the possibility of its growing to what was greater, as Christ had promised; they were surprised at its present greatness; they had not expected that; they could imagine no greater.

We find that the same principle enters into the history of the woman who was cured of an issue of blood. Jairus, who might have known better, asked Christ to come and heal his daughter; and Christ at once rose to go. The girl might have been restored on the spot, as in the case of the lad of the centurion of Capernaum. But Christ could only heal according to

¹ Luke iv. 36.

men's faith. So the woman with the issue of blood snatched the blessing from Him, as He was on the way to heal the girl, and was healed at once. Nay, the maid died as they went, and had to be raised to life. Still the Saviour guided events sympathetically, so as to elevate the faith of the man to a purer, better condition. He saw in the death the action of God calling Him to raise the girl, whom He was committed to heal. He saw too the opportunity of overruling unbelief for the best ends. Suffering to the father there must naturally be, just because of his faithlessness ; he could hardly believe death could be conquered, when it had not been avoided ; he needed Christ's reiterated assurance of the brightest or heavenly side of the fact, to sustain his hope : "Fear not, only believe ; . . . the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." Thus unbelief caused both waiting and suffering, which could be met, like the illness, only by Christ Himself.

This, too, we ought to remark, that Christ's miraculous power lay open to the claim of all. Anyone who had need might draw on it, and would receive as he was capable. He had a right to it, as truly as the disciples to the miraculous power, if he were fit, as truly as sinners to forgiveness, if he claimed it. As Christ had no thought of retaining His power for Himself exclusively, as He even promised it in greater measure, or at least result, than in His own case, so He used it for men whenever God gave Him the opportunity. That He used it only where there was faith was not of His will, as little as that forgiveness could come only on the same condition. The condition was of God's creating, not His ; His duty

was only to observe it. The condition was not arbitrary or limiting; it gave the widest play of opportunity possible. For faith meant desire, need, appreciation, such as in healing meant gratitude and devotion, or in forgiveness meant the forgiving of "men their trespasses also." Faith was not anything really different from the "will" of the gospel message. The great "whosoever will" of spiritual blessing in it had a counterpart here in spirit as regards the blessings offered. Christ lay open to the claims of Jew and Gentile. The constant record is, "He healed them all," or, "As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole." Him that came would He in no wise cast out. Even when overworked, or hungry, or tired, He was at the disposal of every comer. Even those who followed Him into desert parts, where He had gone for rest, were received with kindness. Says Luke,¹ "The multitudes followed them; and He welcomed them, and spake to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing He healed." His helplessness to avoid helping those sent of God to Him was the counterpart of that human ignorance which hemmed in His mind, as other limitations His body. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save,"² was true in more senses than one, and true throughout His life as well as during His agony on the Cross.

Thus we find He not only touched or spoke and so healed, but that He allowed people to touch Him, giving them the initiative, and "as many as touched were made whole."³ More remarkable still, however, was it that healing was taken from Him by one woman

¹ Luke ix. 11.

² Matt. xxvii. 42.

³ Matt. xiv. 36.

at least without His consent, and when He had given her no encouragement. So His will was not essential in the matter, at least any immediate exercise of it; just as His prayer before miracles needed not to be conscious in each case. As behind all prayers there was His constant state of prayerfulness, which rendered a wish a prayer and a command authoritative, and which kept His will constantly filled with desire of doing good to the utmost, so His will was never surprised in any other state and never unprepared, even though the claim made was unknown to it. The permanent state of His will was harmonious with that of Him who had sent His Son to be the Saviour, and bring to men the greatest blessing of which they were capable. God's will intended His Saviour to lie open to all; it never meant His human weakness to be at least a permanent limit on His power of blessing; it gave in this case a premonition of the time when He would be set free from the last traces of it, and become an unresting, open-handed Saviour, in all the glory of heavenly life.

But though the cure came without Christ's will, it did not go without His knowledge. For it cost Him something. Perpetual openness of will to bless implied perpetual willingness for self-sacrifice. The perpetual prayerfulness found in Him meant keeping Himself always willing for that. Whatever was the feeling in Him, whether thrill or weakness, it was as clear and decided to Him as the cure was to her. He felt virtue had gone out of Him, just as she felt in her body that she was healed of her plague. Neither had any doubt as to their own experience. In His case the feeling was

evidently no new thing ; He was accustomed to it, for He knew at once and did not hesitate to say what it implied. He had no doubt of the fact that someone had been cured, but He could not tell who. When the disciples, with their usual ignorance and ill-timed insistence, interfered, He spoke sternly, saying, "Someone did touch Me ; for I perceived that power had gone forth from Me."¹ Then the woman saw she was not hid, and came trembling.

Whether such a case as this affords some explanation of Matthew's application of the words, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases,"² it is hard to say ; it shows at least how real was the cost of a miracle to Christ. We cannot tell how the apostles felt when similarly engaged. They do not seem to have understood their Master's saying on this occasion, so that we may perhaps infer that their miracles had not the same effect on them. Their will was weak, their sympathies were poor, their feelings blunted when compared with His. They were unable to desire with His intensity, because the need did not appeal to them as to Him. Whatever they felt cost them little, and passed unnoticed. It may be even that He suffered, He in whose name, or by whose authority, they were able to do these things. Certainly there was some connection between Him and them, when they were at work.

But that leads us to consider the cures in which Christ did not act by touch—cures performed at a distance ; for by means of the one we shall get at least a little help in understanding the other. Of course

¹ Luke viii. 46, 47.

² Matt. viii. 17.

His ignorance of the case which was being dealt with by His disciples at the foot of the Transfiguration Mount was natural; for there had been no cure, but only the attempt at one. And the knowledge He had of the cure of the servant of the centurion of Capernaum was gained by faith and inference from the faith of the petitioner, rather than held as an intuition or second sight. But, on the other hand, when the disciples to whom He had given power came back, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us," His remark was, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."¹ Now, that seems to imply a knowledge of something in process, though ignorance of its detail—an idea borne out by the fact that He allowed them to give an account of the ministry they had just returned from. This seems to be not very different from the case of the woman who had the issue of blood; for though that was a cure by means of contact, the disciples with Christ's power were His representatives, and touching them meant really touching Him. In each case He knew the fact and was sure of it, though He knew nothing of the particulars. He was ignorant of the absent facts in each case, but was conscious of the feeling in Himself, as the fountainhead of power, when He healed the woman, and sure of the results of His wrestling, intercessory prayer for His absent representatives. In this case He had, possibly by that moral imagination which is a great result of belief in principle and in a spiritual God, seen an ideal result of which He was sure, a result He expressed in His words and they interpreted by their account. The

¹ Luke x. 18.

process would thus ally itself with many of His predictions. Christ's cures at a distance were therefore miracles of knowledge, by which He recognised the fitness of the applicants and saw what they were entitled to at the hand of God.

One other point we must still consider, namely, the connection between forgiveness and healing by miracle. The two things were not the same ; some got the one and others the other, according to their faith ; and some who had the forgiveness were not sure of it till He made it clear. Yet the two things were connected. They both came by Jesus Christ, and in the same way. Men wondered at His words as to the one even more than as to the other. "Why doth this man thus speak? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but one—God?"¹ But Christ made it plain that each was equally easy to Him: "Whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Take up thy bed and walk?" And He even showed, as we have seen, that He preferred the one to the other, forgiving the sins of the paralytic, or rather declaring them forgiven, and not merely healing him as desired. The one was His duty like the other, because it lay in the line of His mission, and was calculated to aid it. Besides that, both were possible only to faith, on the person's side as well as on the Saviour's. The person had a right to it by faith, and that right Christ had given him by his faith. Christ informed him of what was his by God's will, and the man only credited that. His word was declarative to the man because His existence and will were a request in God's eyes and a

¹ Mark ii. 7.



request according to God's will. His word of explanation is, "Thy faith hath saved thee." When He said, "Thy sins are forgiven," "they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins? And He said unto the woman" (but before them, as the warrant and defence of His words), "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in (into) peace."¹ Thus Christ taught men that they had the right to healing or forgiveness, either or both, according to their need. Of course, He administered His power for their greatest need, and healed in order to lead to God. In fact, however much He pitied sufferers, He thought suffering endurable when compared with the interests of spiritual well-being, for which alone it existed. When John's messengers asked in their master's name, "Art thou He that cometh, or look we for another?" He healed many; were they kept waiting for that end, or were they, as Christ saw, gathered providentially for an evidence in His favour? So at least He treated them. This explains how He associated the working of miracles with the preaching of the gospel, and assigned both to His apostles likewise, saying, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and He that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." Nay, we begin to see how, after His resurrection, He could breathe on His disciples and say, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained,"² and how He could fulfil to them even His former promise, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father."

¹ Luke vii. 49, 50.² John xx. 23.

CHAPTER XII

THE MENTAL IDENTITY OF CHRIST AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

WE have been hitherto occupied with Christ's mind as it wrought in Him ere He died and rose again. Let us now look at its working after the resurrection, and see if there be any differences; if there be any, let us see whether they be essential, or whether they indicate a real agreement and merely such advance as might be expected. In looking at this subject, however, we must remember that whilst the space of time covered is much shorter than that which we were occupied with before, the record of it is also much more meagre.

The identity of Christ after His resurrection may be seen in the essential unity of His mental conditions with those seen in Him ere He suffered death. That identity is brought out in three ways: by reminiscences, which show He had still a knowledge of what had taken place; by habits which we see to have belonged to Him before; and by continuity of purpose, though with progress in it beyond what He had shown previously.

To begin with the reminiscences: Christ was Himself at times very unrecognisable, because of the change which had begun in His appearance after He rose; though

there is no sign of change in the case of the son of the widow of Nain, or Jairus' daughter, or Lazarus, as regards appearance. None had any doubt in regard to them; the Jews, who could not deny or get rid of Lazarus' case, had even thought to kill him, and so get him out of the way, because he had become an inconvenient testimony against them. But if Jesus was sometimes very altered in appearance, He had no difficulty in recognising, naming, and identifying His friends whom He had known before death—Mary, Thomas, Peter, John, and others; just as Lazarus knew his friends and sat at table with them again, and Jairus' daughter took food from, because she recognised and did not feel startled at, her mother. So, if the Saviour was altered externally, He was the same person really, recognising His old friends, and willing to recognise them. The memory of heaven was not preserved in Him as a child, but the remembrance of earth had become part of Him for ever. If He carried with Him the memory of heaven now, it did not displace the remembrance of the events of His humiliation.

As we see, He had remembered His appointment to meet with His disciples in Galilee on a mountain;¹ for, either in heaven or at the very first entrance again on earthly life, He had given the angel of the resurrection instructions to remind them of their duty. His life before and after was one; the promises made were to be kept. His first thought was as to others! His first feeling was that of duty; in which, without doubt, as had been the case from the first, there was a strain of love!

Many of the features of the scene on the shore of the

¹ Matt. xxvi. 32, xxviii. 7, xxviii. 16.

Galilean lake are like whispering echoes out of the earlier history¹—the persons and the locality the same, but their relations somewhat modified. The casting of the net on the right side of the boat at Christ's command, with the great draft and the heaps of struggling fishes on the shore; Peter throwing himself into the waters, as formerly he walked on them to get to his Master; the feeding of the disciples, instead of the multitudes, with food whose source none knew anything about; Peter's questioning as to John instead of John's mother questioning as to her sons; one cannot read these without being struck by the resemblance to previous scenes in His history and theirs.

Setting aside, however, such detail, which He may have desired to use as the means of awakening old and fading memories in them, we find that on such a great point as the matter and power of His ministry there was conscious continuity of view in Him. He called His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins,² just as He had done before; and in connection with that He made distinct reference to the things they had heard previously from Him as constituting their preparation; whilst the command to wait for the Holy Spirit³ is like the echo of passages in His parting address before He died, and quite in the line of His promise,⁴ "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you."

The witness of habit must, however, give not only more

¹ John xxi. 1.

² Acts i. 4.

³ Luke xxiv. 47.

⁴ John xvi. 7.

definite evidence than signs of remembrance, but, specially if trifling and unsuspected, yield more weighty and valuable results. Take, for instance, the great mental habit which marked Him so prominently, yet in regard to which He had been unique up to the end, namely, His view of faith and His feeling towards it. He still held to that. He made its presence His guide still. It ruled His dealing with Mary Magdalene when she mistook Him for the gardener and was under the impression that her Lord was utterly lost to her. It explains the way in which He conducted His conversation with His two disciples on the way to Emmaus: His theme was, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" It explains His dealing with the apostles in a room whose door was shut: His theme was, "Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold Me having." It explains His action towards Thomas when He met him a week after; His theme was still Himself, and the end faith in Him: "Reach hither thy finger," He said, "and see My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." It explains His special dealing with the apostle who had denied Him,¹ as well as with the others who had fled.² Nay, it explains His dealing with them in Galilee, and not in Jerusalem only; for by it He taught them to trust Him for everything, and to believe in His constant, even if

¹ John xxi. 15.

² John xxi. 14.

unseen, presence. What He sought to create or to find in everyone was faith. His object was still to destroy the unbelief which hampered and thwarted Him. He acted on the remembrance of their failure in faith at His betrayal, and on His sense of it as their fundamental need; so that it had to be recreated in them. He was willing to use means, any means, to secure it, just as of old, because it was pre-eminent in His eyes. As He had put clay on the blind man's eyes, so He offered to His disciples the testimony of His hands and His feet.

But this great habit of His has many kin to it; we take, for instance, the habit which lies at the root of the one we have been looking at—the habit of thinking of Himself as pre-eminent—important—and we see the same thing. No one ever thought of himself in the same way; yet here His view is just what it was before, the view He had died for. He who says, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth,"¹ is He who had announced, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father," and had assured His followers, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life for the sheep."

You see the same marked idea of the importance of the Old Testament, and the same habit of using constantly and relying on that book, though rather for the sake of others than Himself. In the same way His making as if He would have gone farther at Emmaus, until the disciples constrained Him, reminds one of what He did when long before He made as though He would have passed His disciples on the lake of Galilee. His

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18.

being revealed to His followers in the breaking of bread seems to have had some connection with what must have been His peculiar manner of blessing that which was to be eaten. In leading the disciples out to the solitude of Bethany, we see the same habit as that shown in leading a blind man in Galilee aside ere He cured him, and in expelling the crowd from the room where Jairus' daughter lay ere He could cure her. He was transfigured whilst praying; He ascended as He blessed. The fact that He came into the midst of His disciples on the first day of the week reminds us of His habit of attendance in the synagogues on the Sabbath day.¹ Jerusalem was still loved and longed after; "beginning at Jerusalem" is the word now of Him who had before apostrophised the city, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!"

But stronger than the evidence of reminiscence, or even of habit, is that of object and plan. These were so peculiar to Himself, so far beyond the appreciation of those who had been most advanced in knowledge, and most sympathetic in feeling, that when we find Him clear upon them, fully aware of the point at which all had been broken off, gathering up the scattered threads, and even carrying their lines forward, we have conclusive evidence that He is still the same person and unchanged, at least in His inner being. We see that in Him there was continuity of life with the past. This is evident in the knowledge He had of His followers and their state, and of the affairs of His kingdom and how these must be conducted. True, He asked Mary Magdalene whom it was that she sought; but from what He must have seen

¹ John xx. 19, 26.

her doing at the entry of the tomb, that must have been evident to Him; for in any case it was probable by her very proximity to it. He asked, not because He was ignorant, but, as often in His earlier days, to elicit the condition of her heart, and be able to deal with it. Such, too, is the explanation of the question He put to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, "Why are ye so sad?" They could not conceive any one ignorant of, or unimpressed by, the great event which had taken place. And we cannot imagine, that though their eyes were holden so that they did not recognise Him, His were blind to them. He might have used of both these questions the words which He used in another connection,¹ "Because of the people standing around I said it, that they might believe." As we have already seen, there is no doubt about His knowledge of the inner state of His apostles. That would, however, be little; it might have been Divine, if He had not used the knowledge for ends similar to those He had formerly aimed at. He calculated on their condition, and knew by the past what it must be now. His very first words when He met them were, whether because of His appearing, or His appearance, or their conscious guilt, "Fear not."

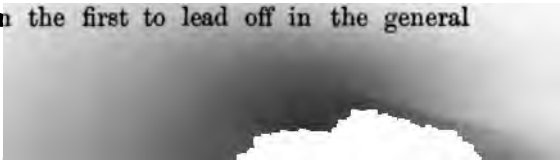
Examine His aims; they are still the same. He had offered Himself to the nation, specially and authoritatively at Jerusalem, and been rejected. In that respect His work was complete, and God's will had been gained. Death made the rejection final; He could not go back to work the work He was engaged on ere the crisis

¹ John xi. 42.

came. What He was to do now might build on and continue, or expand it, but was not the same work. On the other hand, His work by means of His disciples was not done. He had trained them, associated them with Himself, used them. He knew that, under apparent failure, there was capacity in them for real success. They must therefore go on with the work He had called them to. Its characteristics are partly the same as they had been, but are partly new. He is to be with His servants always, though in a different way from formerly. His presence now, and then, is to be the ground of their faith and its energy. Rejected by the Jews, His object is not to serve them only; His eye is on the Gentile world too. To gain the world He can promise His workers such a fulness of the Spirit, and consequent largeness of result, as never was before. He sets them on the old lines, but puts before them a wider range of activity, and promises them a greater degree of success. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."¹ Now He takes pains in reviving and enlarging their faith by means of His reality and continual nearness, and He does so in view of this wider sphere. He seeks to rouse them from the stupor by which they were overcome when stricken by the blow of His death, and to raise their faith, till it is adequate in assurance, in expectations, in patience, to this great aim. He who had said that the gospel must first be preached every-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

where for a testimony before the end could come, now sets Himself to bring that to pass. He lets Mary see that He is real, though not open to touch, as He had been. He lets the two Emmaus disciples see that His death has been the means of perfecting Him, in the view of God and according to the Old Testament, for His position as the Christ. He lets the body of the apostles see that He claims dominion over all, and that in seeking to secure that for Him they have His presence and power to the end, whether in a shut, secluded room, or engaged in business in distant Galilee. Instead of His outer presence, which they have found to vary so much that He is sometimes almost unrecognisable, they are to have its effect, namely, the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is the form His continuous and abiding benediction from on high is to take; it is to bring and give them the power of Him who has all power in heaven and on earth. As He had seen them from the mountain top in Galilee on the lake, as He saw them from its shore in the dim dawn when they were in difficulties, as He saw them in the upper room with their fears, and on the road in their despair, so He will see and deal with their need, so He will be near and come to help them till the end of time. The way in which He dealt with His apostles in Galilee seems to have had special reference to the necessity of making clear to them their official position, and impressing on them its work as the great duty of their lives. In like manner He had to deal with Peter, who had received a special message to attend the tryst, and yet had been the first to lead off in the general



outburst of secularity. He had to remind him of his great failure; only, however, to assure him of express forgiveness, and then of special duty as its consequence.

As we have seen in the former chapter, Christ, when calling His disciples to faith, promised them the power it implied. These signs were to follow them that believed: "They shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."¹ This greater power when it came was to fit them not only to face Jerusalem, but also to cope with the world. Now His eye could look forward to those for whom He had prayed, those who should "believe on Him through their word."

Nothing, however, was more characteristic of what Christ intended, and what He expected to gain by them, than the new place in which He put Himself, as shown by the new relation to Himself in which He set baptism.² It was not, as under John, to repentance, but into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; that description set forth the source of the distinctive authority and power it implied. He did not hesitate by it to perpetuate His own name, as well as to set it in the forefront for ever, as that of one equal with God, and in rank between the Father and the Spirit. Most probably, too, the fact that He met more than once with His gathered disciples on the first day of the week indicates a similar assumption as "Lord of the Sabbath." It is certainly noticeable, that when His disciples were afraid to ask Him anything after His

¹ Mark xvi. 18.

² Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

resurrection,¹ the reason was not as before, the unpleasantness of the truth they feared they might have to face, but the sense of disparity between Him and them, due to the new conception they had of His nature and majesty. And yet all this advance in personal claim, like that in respect to the range of work already noticed, is apparent. It is only the coming forth clearly of what had been not obscurely hinted at long before, but had not been openly declared till now because of the unfitness of those whom the knowledge of it was to benefit.

There is not very much material available to guide us in forming clear ideas as to the state of knowledge in Christ's human mind after He rose. We have seen that the questions He put, so far from indicating ignorance, were the result of knowledge of the hearts He was dealing with. We have seen that He had a full acquaintance with the state of mind in His apostles, and guided Himself by that in supplying their spiritual need. Of course it may be said that that indicates only remembrance of the limited knowledge He had before gained by experience. But if that be granted, as I think it may, there still remains the case of Thomas, where we have no indication of any human means of communication, and the knowledge of Peter's defection into worldliness, "I go a-fishing," at the head of the ten. There seems no need of looking on such knowledge as given specially by supernatural means to the occasion. It is more natural to look on it as the beginnings of that omniscience as the Christ, which

¹John xxi. 12.

is seen in regard to Stephen and Saul, Ananias and Judas of Damascus, and the street Straight. We may conceive that the limits of knowledge were burst with the tomb, and that He outstepped them when He received the gift of His spiritual body.

One thing only remains now to be noticed. Christ did not, as before, lodge with His disciples, though seemingly they lived with one another ; He abode apart, in the spirit of that unapproachableness which He had proclaimed to Mary Magdalene at the tomb ; and He seems to have sought their presence only on special occasions or for special ends. Where He was, and how He occupied Himself, we know not. Nor does He appear to have conceived that He had a duty toward everyone, even to those with faith, whom He met. His outlook was wider, but His action was narrower. He devoted Himself specially to those who were to carry on His cause, as if He were conscious that His outer presence with them could not be long continued. He seems to have felt that His work was done, that all the rest to be carried out might be suitably left in their hand, and that the day of their activity and of His rest had dawned.

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